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General Assembly

Seventy-first session

Official Records

9th plenary meeting
Tuesday, 20 September 2016, 3 p.m.
New York

President: Mr. Thomson ..... (Fiji)

The meeting was called to order at 3.50 p.m.

Address by Mr. Béji Caïd Essebsi, President of the Republic of Tunisia

The President: The Assembly will now hear an address by His Excellency Mr. Béji Caïd Essebsi, President of the Republic of Tunisia.

Béji Caïd Essebsi, President of the Republic of Tunisia, was escorted into the General Assembly Hall.

The President: On behalf of the General Assembly, I have the honour to welcome to the United Nations His Excellency Mr. Béji Caïd Essebsi, President of the Republic of Tunisia, and to invite him to address the Assembly.

President Essebsi (*spoke in Arabic*): Allow me, at the outset, to express to you, President Thomson, and through you to your country, our congratulations on the trust placed in you to guide the work of this session. We have great hopes that this session will help us embed the principles underpinning the Organization and the General Assembly. We very much hope that this occasion will also be an opportunity to promote international collaboration. I would also like to express to Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon my most sincere thanks and appreciation for all of his great efforts for the good of peoples around the world, as well as his promotion of the noble principles of the United Nations.

This session is taking place at the same time as the celebration of independence of the State of Tunisia — 60 years of independence as a modern country. It is 60 years since we joined the United Nations, and this is an opportunity for us to reiterate how much Tunisia is committed to the purposes and principles behind the creation of the Organization. We are fully prepared to pursue assistance to the Organization so that the United Nations can accomplish its noble goal of promoting peace, security, human rights and development throughout the world.

Tunisia has had the unique experience of building democracy based on national accord so that we can overcome differences in political opinion. That has allowed us to see major political accomplishments. We have a new, modern Constitution. We have held legislative and presidential elections that were witnessed by the entire world and declared transparent, free and fair. That has increased our confidence in ourselves and has made us more able to face up to the challenges we face. It also led to the Tunisian National Dialogue Quartet winning the Nobel Peace Prize in 2015, which in turn enabled us to rectify our political trajectory to overcome a political impasse.

Our democratic experience in Tunisia has had major achievements, but we still need support. Given our fragile economy, we still need to strengthen our democracy. Five years have already gone by since the 2011 Tunisian revolution, but we are still facing enormous challenges on the path towards achieving an economic revival and improving living standards.

We have launched an ambitious initiative to meet the expectations of the Tunisian people. We called for

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the establishment of a Government of national unity that would be capable of satisfying our needs at this stage in our history: winning the fight against terrorism, accelerating coordination between development and growth, stimulating job creation, fighting corruption and laying the foundations for good governance and for the implementation of effective social policies.

This initiative has enjoyed broad support from political parties and different national organizations. It led to the establishment of a Government of national unity, with robust participation by women, headed by a young leader. This reflects our determination to allow young people and women to assume important roles in this democratic experience. Tunisia left authoritarianism behind in 2011, and our country is now under the rule of law. We reiterate our determination to move forward toward further democracy and freedom and to face up to all attempts to take us back in time.

Of course, we are still a young country. We are facing major economic and social challenges of an unprecented scale that jeopardize our path to the future, especially given the regional context, particularly regional terrorism. That requires us to seek robust support from our partners so that we can overcome the challenges and osbtacles and make headway on internal development and create jobs for young people, particularly those with qualifications.

On 29 and 30 November, Tunisia will host an international conference to support the economy and seek investment. Participants will include Heads of State and Government, representatives of international organizations, investment funds, civil society representatives and representatives from the public and private sectors. It will be an opportunity for our brothers and friends to express their support and solidarity with Tunisia, including their support for democracy in our country at this particularly critical point in time.

This year's general debate is of particular importance, especially following the adoption of the new Sustainable Development Goals. It is of particular importance because it is linked to the ambitious 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. Tunisia also adopted ambitious goals in establishing our own development plan. We will spare no effort to make the 2030 Agenda a reality.

We call upon all partners to redouble their efforts to assist developing countries as they seek to achieve the Sustainable Development Goals, including by providing them with the support they are counting on — especially for African countries, which are encountering many economic, social and environmental difficulties. Those challenges require robust assistance from the international community so that African communities and countries can achieve development. We need to make certain that we can do that in order to ensure that we have peace, stability and security and so that we can prevent conflicts and confront terrorism and extremism.

Today, we renew our commitment to the African Union Agenda 2063, which is the sum of our ambitions and our dedication. Given the close link between peace, security and development, we also renew our commitment to strengthening our participation in United Nations peacekeeping operations and to taking a more active role in capacity-building within the African continent, including on military assistance.

The Arab world is seeing an increase in violence and conflict, which is a major source of concern. Violence, extremism and terrorism are spreading. We have seen that lead to an increase in organized criminal activity, which is destabilizing every one of our countries without exception. The lack of stability in the Arab world is just a part of the instability found throughout the world. Therefore, we call upon everyone to find urgent political solutions to all the issues concerning the region. First and foremost is the Palestinian question, which requires a fair, comprehensive solution that will provide justice for the Palestinian people, bring an end to their suffering and allow them to obtain their historic legitimate rights, in particular the establishment of an independent State, with Al-Quds as its capital, in conformity with related international decisions.

We are greatly concerned by the crisis in Libya, and our concerns will remain while instability reigns in that brotherly country, with all the implications that it can have for our security and our economy. We are firmly committed to promoting reconciliation and agreement between the different parties in Libya so that they can implement all phases of the Libyan Political Agreement, signed in 17 December 2015, under the auspices of the United Nations. We shall also continue our support for the Government of National Accord so that it can assume its responsibilities and accomplish its role in re-establishing peace, stability and security and in combating terrorism and improving the living standards of the Libyan people.

We are following with concern the evolution of the situations in Syria and Yemen. We are concerned about the implications for security and the humanitarian disaster resulting from those conflicts. We need a political solution to the situations in those two countries so that they can maintain their unity and territorial integrity in order to ensure peace.

Mr. Onyeama (Nigeria), Vice-President, took the Chair.

I stand here before the Assembly as we commemorate our independence and the sixtieth anniversary of our accession to the Organization. That reminds me of the founder of modern Tunisia, Habib Bourguiba, who in a speech confirmed that Tunisia, having recovered its independence, declared its complete commitment to the purposes and principles and the noble humanitarian values enshrined in the Charter of the United Nations. Today, as we begin a new chapter in our history — our ancient history — with many efforts to advance democracy and the protection and promotion of human rights, we again affirm our determination to create a conducive environment for our citizens to be able to live in dignity. As Tunisia grounds itself on the efforts of the Tunisian people, with the support of our brothers and partners, we firmly believe that those efforts will be successful in contributing to security and peace in the region and worldwide.

The Acting President: On behalf of the General Assembly, I wish to thank the President of the Republic of Tunisia for the statement he has just made.

Mr. Béji Caid Essebsi, President of the Republic of Tunisia, was escorted from the General Assembly Hall.

Address by Mr. Andrzej Duda, President of the Republic of Poland

The Acting President: The Assembly will now hear an address by the President of the Republic of Poland.

Mr. Andrzej Duda, President of the Republic of Poland, was escorted into the General Assembly Hall.

The Acting President: On behalf of the General Assembly, I have the honour to welcome to the United Nations His Excellency Mr. Andrzej Duda, President of the Republic of Poland, and to invite him to address the Assembly.

President Duda (*spoke in Polish; interpretation provided by the delegation*): At the outset, I wish to congratulate Mr. Peter Thomson, President of the General Assembly at its seventy-first session, on his election to his important position. I assure him of my country's full support for his effort. At the same time, I wish to express my warm gratitude to Mr. Mogens Lykketoft for his active presidency during the seventieth session, during which I was honoured to take part for the first time in my capacity as the President of the Republic of Poland.

Sustainable development, the protection of human rights, and peace and security are the goals pursued by the United Nations the achievement of which humankind deeply yearns. By adopting the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and the new Sustainable Development Goals last year, we demonstrated that we are capable of acting together as an international community to achieve success, implement the required tasks and, at the same time, approach new ambitious goals.

I wish to address the three foundations of sustainable development, without which such development will never be possible. It is my profound conviction that these are the rules with which we should all identify if we truly care about human happiness and the successful progress of our nations. These three rules — the three foundations of sustainable development — are responsibility, solidarity and justice.

Responsibility arises from our obligation to safeguard the heritage that we are going to leave to our children and grandchildren: how we are going to be remembered by them and what they are going to write about us in history books. Responsibility is underpinned by the conviction that history neither begins nor ends here and now, but is a succession of generations, destinies and commitments.

Understood in that way, responsibility nowadays pertains in particular to social issues and the natural environment. Responsible development is development that cares for the appropriate continuity to be preserved between generations — past, present and future. As in an Olympic relay, the smooth handing off of the baton is of key importance when one approaches the changeover box.

On many occasions, as history has illustrated, this historical continuity is interrupted. This is what happens when people want to build too rapidly while

destroying what our forebearers left behind, acting against their beliefs and their sense of rightness. When order gives in to chaos, social bonds are destroyed and fear and anxiety are aroused. When respect for tradition is absent and social engineering is used instead, development itself is not possible, let alone sustainable development.

Progress that does not create but destroys is in fact regression. Family is the basic form of human community that harmoniously links together succeeding generations. That is why solicitude for its durability and welfare is so crucially significant. Human rights are also family rights, and their attainment involves active support for a multigenerational society. The main instrument of the latter is a pro-family policy.

I am proud to declare that the authorities of the Republic of Poland are now carrying out an ambitious programme for improving the living conditions of children in Polish families. The groundwork underpinning any development is the creation of appropriate conditions for the conception of new life.

The second challenge to sustainable development, one which also calls for responsible policies, is care for the natural environment. The implementation of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development will not be possible without fighting the degradation of nature — an effort to be undertaken with determination and consistency. We were reminded by Pope Francis, in his encyclical *Laudato si'*, that the natural environment is a common good, belonging to all and meant for all.

The immensity of the challenges we face can be best illustrated by the fact that, at the recent International Geological Congress, scholars came to the conclusion that we might describe a new geological era, termed Anthropocene. For the very first time in the history of the Earth, this era has not been determined by geological but by human activity.

We realize what grave environmental consequences changes in the natural environment produce. However, their social, economic and political ramifications are of equal importance. We can already ask ourselves whether we are threatened by climate wars. This is precisely why only global actions undertaken in concord by all States can bring about improvement in the condition of nature on our Earth.

Last year in Paris we jointly demonstrated that we are capable of taking responsible decisions by adopting a new climate agreement. The Republic of Poland was an active participant in those negotiations. I wish to inform the Assembly that Poland has initiated the process of ratifying the Paris Agreement and the Doha Amendment. As President of the Republic of Poland, I attach great importance to its conclusion as quickly as possible, in line with the provisions of our Constitution.

Responsibility for the natural environment, however, involves more than the mere prevention of climate change. In line with the spirit of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, it also includes protecting the water and the soil and fighting desertification. Responsible development requires a balanced approach, and therefore the natural environment should be viewed from the three perspectives of water, soil and air.

If it is to be sustainable, development must also take into account the specificity of individual countries, particularly their economic and employment structures.

The second pillar of sustainable development is solidarity. This concept is particularly close to the hearts of the Polish people, who, led by the social movement bearing the same name, carried out a peaceful political transformation a quarter of a century ago, rejecting the system founded on lies and enslavement. It is thanks to a community that is sensitive to the misfortunes of others and respectful of all people, regardless of their origin or financial situation, that Polish solidarity is built upon such durable foundations. Today the Republic of Poland implements the principle of solidarity on two planes: domestic, and global.

Solidarity is a development undertaken in the name of welfare for all social groups, not only those that are strongest and most influential. Politics operating in the spirit of solidarity are politics that care for the weakest, not the strongest. That is why it must rely on solidarity between employers and employees, and solidarity between more developed and less developed regions.

Finally, the most fundamental solidarity is a solidarity with those who have a sense of attainment, with those who struggle to survive each and every day. Only a development model founded on solidarity is capable of producing a system where man, his needs and his aspirations are at its centre. This system must afford equal opportunities to all and allow us to tap into the potential represented by those who have thus far been living in social exclusion.

It is the concept of development founded on solidarity that lies at the heart of the policies pursued by Poland's present Government. In line with its tenets, improvement of the quality of life of all citizens should arise from the measures taken by the Government, and not just macroeconomic indicators, which are often insufficient in translating the advancement of the former.

We do not want to be captives of economic dogmas; we want solutions that allow the active participation of all social groups in development processes, giving them equal opportunity to benefit from economic growth. Such solutions will produce the expected outcomes for restraining exclusion and poverty and for levelling out social inequalities.

Our policy is therefore consistent with the ambitious vision of the 2030 Agenda, which we jointly decided to implement one year ago. I think the time has come to start a global coalition of States for the solidarity-based development of societies. Solidarity in international relations is, first and foremost, humanitarian and developmental aid in all territories affected by military conflicts, economic crises or natural disasters.

The unprecedented scale of migration flows in the contemporary world — a phenomenon that we need to confront directly — is a reminder of our great shared responsibility: to begin actions to eliminate the real roots of poverty and to guarantee everyone the right to live in his or her own home country.

Poland has been watching with anxiety and concern the growing number of people affected by conflicts, especially in Syria and in Ukraine. Guided by our sense of solidarity, we have increased our humanitarian and development aid in the Middle East region and to the East.

In our efforts to build peace and sustainable development, we attach great importance to the education of children and young people. That is why we provide financial support to education projects in Africa. My country has been, and will continue to be, an active advocate for solidarity in the international arena.

The third pillar of sustainable development is justice. A just and equitable order, where the sustainable development model can be delivered, is founded on respect for human rights and the law of nations. Individual freedom, the dignity of the human person, the inviolability of human life and freedom of conscience and religion are all constituent parts of the catalogue of inalienable human rights, which nowadays call for particular protection. There are far too many places around the world where freedom is restricted by an oppressive political system, human dignity is violated and humankind's most fundamental right — the right to life — is encroached upon.

Our fundamental objection is that there are so many places in the world where people die because of the religion they profess, which is only a matter of conscience. We cannot stay silent in the face of suffering Christians who are murdered in the name of religious fanaticism. The world must react to the phenomenon of religion-based genocide, which has become increasingly common.

That is why Poland welcomed with particular satisfaction the fact that the protection of human rights has been given pride of place among the priorities of the new development agenda. Through our global agreement, we have jointly reaffirmed the interdependence that exists between development and human rights and freedoms. Only through respect for all human rights — political, social, economic and cultural — can we fully harness human potential and eventually implement the sustainable development model. Nevertheless, it must be remembered that all human rights are derived from the most fundamental one, namely, the right to life.

Our endeavours to make the world a better place to live will be futile, however, if we are incapable of safeguarding the absolute primacy of international law in relations among States. Last year, in this very Hall, I spoke about the need to ground international relations in law (see A/70/PV.13). I went on to emphasize that all States were equally obligated to carry out their international commitments and that any actions violating provisions of international law, among them political sovereignty and territorial integrity in particular, should be categorically denounced by the global community.

Today, I wish to reiterate, in the clearest terms, that we must abide by the rules, a principle best expressed by a Roman proverb, "ex injuria jus non oritur", meaning that law cannot arise from illegal acts. A non-agressor has a right to the territory he occupies. We reject the system by which it is the politics of force and aggression that decides a nation's destiny. Peace and security are two fundamental preconditions for

sustainable development. The effectiveness of global action in that regard will depend on international solidarity and concerted action among States.

In the meantime, any act of aggression that encroaches on international commitments undermines mutual trust among States and societies. It undermines the order that was so strenuously built in the wake of the Second World War. That is why it is so crucially important to ensure that the policy of force will always be met with the decisive opposition of the international community. For the law to be effective, any violation thereof must absolutely trigger the execution of significant countermeasures.

I also wish to highlight the fact that the realization of the principle of justice in international relations is equally jeopardized if we decide to base it on the division of spheres of influence among super-Powers, for proxy wars would break out, respect for the subjective status of weaker States would disappear and the freedom and equality of States and nations would be encroached upon. Let us recall than any instance of peace made at the expense of someone else's freedom can hardly ever last and is never equitable.

This year, my country has hosted two events that restore faith in the power of international cooperation among States and nations. The North Atlantic Treaty Organization Summit in July testified to NATO's unity in the effort to build peace and freedom in the trans-Atlantic space. It was an expression of the failed responsibility of NATO countries that led to an agreement resulting in Europe's heightened security. The outcomes of the Warsaw Summit are an expression of allied solidarity and respect for the independence of free nations, and hence the values that underpin equitable international order.

Soon after the NATO Summit, in my hometown of Krakow, we celebrated International Youth Day, during which young people from all over the world met with Pope Francis. Those days were a time of celebration, a time of joy, friendship and love. The young people who gathered in Poland taught us that the road to peace begins with human solidarity, based on concern for others regardless of origin or religion.

Responsibility, solidarity and justice are the pillars on which Poland would like to build an international community for the sustainable development of free nations and equal States.

The Acting President: On behalf of the General Assembly, I wish to thank the President of the Republic of Poland for the statement he has just made.

Mr. Andrzej Duda, President of the Republic of Poland, was escorted from the General Assembly Hall.

Address by Mr. Jacob Zuma, President of the Republic of South Africa

The Acting President: The Assembly will now hear an address by the President of the Republic of South Africa.

Mr. Jacob Zuma, President of the Republic of South Africa, was escorted into the General Assembly Hall.

The Acting President: On behalf of the General Assembly, I have the honour to welcome to the United Nations His Excellency Mr. Jacob Zuma, President of the Republic of South Africa, and to invite him to address the Assembly.

President Zuma: I wish to congratulate the President on his election as President of the General Assembly at its seventy-first session. I assure him of South Africa's continued support in the implementation of his priorities and responsibilities throughout his term. We also commend Mr. Mogens Lykketoft of Denmark for his able stewardship of the General Assembly during its historic seventieth session.

The year 2016 is an important year in South Africa, as we mark two significant historic anniversaries in our country. We recently marked the sixtieth anniversary of the 1956 Women's March against discriminatory and racist laws, and the fortieth anniversary of the youth uprising against apartheid of 16 June 1976. Those two events marked significant turning points in the history of our struggle against apartheid minority rule in our country. The Women's March brought into sharp focus the gender dimension of the struggle and the equal role of women in the fight against white domination, oppression and injustice. Equally, the youth uprising 40 years ago highlighted and cemented the role of young people in fighting for liberation and a better society.

We are reminded of those two milestones as we address the theme of this debate: "The Sustainable Development Goals: a universal push to transform our world". Last year, world leaders marked the seventieth anniversary of the United Nations by adopting the 2030

Agenda, that is, the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). We committed ourselves to an ambitious and transformative global development programme that seeks to address the triple challenge of this century, which is poverty, unemployment and inequality. To a great extent, the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) played a critical role in galvanizing Governments and communities all over the world to put in place programmes and policies aimed at poverty eradication and addressing socioeconomic development, particularly in Africa.

It is a well-known reality that our continent, particularly sub-Saharan Africa, did not achieve the targets that were set in the MDGs. It was for that reason that we insisted that the Sustainable Development Goals should continue the unfinished business of the MDGs. We therefore have an interest in ensuring the full implementation of the SDGs as we take forward the agenda of promoting Africa's sustainable development.

We have made significant strides in the past couple of decades in reversing the impact of underdevelopment and the legacies of colonialism and apartheid in Africa. If the African continent is to develop faster, we need to address certain constraints. That includes inadequate infrastructure; high dependency on primary products; high exposure to commodity-price volatility; limited investment in research and development, science, innovation and technology; and low private-sector investment, as well as the need to continue improving skills. To respond to some of those constraints, the continent has embarked upon a number of initiatives, including the New Partnership for Africa's Development, the Presidential Infrastructure Championing Initiative, the African Mining Vision and the Programme for Infrastructure Development in Africa.

In South Africa, we have put in place a national development plan that is aligned with both Agenda 2063 of the African Union and the Sustainable Development Goals. At the core of our development plan is a focus on poverty eradication and raising the standard of living of our people. Our national development plan is also in line with the drive for the industrialization of Africa. That will contribute to eradicating poverty and reducing inequality and unemployment, and will also contribute to global growth and prosperity. It is therefore imperative that Africa and the least developed countries, which were left behind in previous industrialisation processes, not be excluded from the fourth, or new, industrial revolution.

The successful implementation of Africa's development plans depends on the availability of resources. We are therefore seriously concerned about the loss of the continent's resources through illicit financial flows. The joint African Union-United Nations Economic Commission for Africa High-level Panel on Illicit Financial Flows from Africa estimates that illicit flows from Africa could amount to as much as $50 billion per year. Illicit financial flows deprive developing countries of economic resources that are much needed to uplift their economies in order to provide infrastructure and basic services, such as education and health care. We urge the world at large to treat this problem with the seriousness and urgency that it deserves.

We also need to close the gap that has painfully divided people between rich and the poor and divided countries between big and small economies. Global inequality and economic exclusion have become a serious threat to global peace and stability. Inclusive growth is therefore a peace, security and prosperity imperative. However, inclusive growth will remain a distant dream if powerful nations continue to put their national interests ahead of the global collective interest.

The African continent remains committed, through the African Union and its Peace and Security Architecture, to resolving the remaining conflicts. We have committed ourselves to silencing the guns by 2020. We appeal to the Security Council in particular to support African peace operations so that we can achieve that noble goal. The situations in Libya, South Sudan and the Central African Republic remain a continental priority. We strongly urge the Security Council to better align and coordinate with the African Union in efforts to bring about peace in those sister countries and on the continent at large.

Beyond the continent, we remain concerned about threats of terrorism. Fifteen years after the 11 September terrorist attacks on the United States, international terrorism remains a challenge that no single country or region has been able to deal with successfully. We have witnessed the rise of the Islamic State in Iraq and the Levant and are horrified by its brutal and senseless killings. The conflicts in both Libya and Syria have provided fertile ground for the terrorists to carry out their unjustified terrorist activities.

In less than five years, the conflict in Syria has led to chaos in that country, with a devastating effect on

the stability of the region. The deadlock in the Security Council on the Syrian question exposes the inherent structural dysfunction of the 1945 post-Second World War consensus. We must therefore ask ourselves if the United Nations, and particularly the Security Council as currently configured, can fulfil its mandate in addressing the challenges of the twenty-first century.

The Security Council is supposed to act in our collective interests, without being bogged down by the narrow domestic interests of a few States. It is imperative and urgent that the United Nations be reformed, and in particular the Council. South Africa has been calling, and will continue to call, for fundamental reform of the Security Council in order to ensure the representation of Africa. One billion people cannot continue to be denied a voice in this manner.

The lack of progress in finding a durable solution to the Palestinian question and the Sahrawi Arab Democratic Republic's struggle for self-determination remains of major concern for us. It is important that the United Nations carry out its historic mission to ensure that the two longest-standing decolonization and occupation issues are resolved once and for all, in fulfilment of the objectives set forth under the Charter of the United Nations.

The signing of the Paris Agreement last year marked a historic moment in humankind's resolve to minimize the impact of climate change and address the human contribution to it. I would like to take this opportunity to commend Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon for the extraordinary leadership that he provided since the fifteenth Conference of the Parties to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change, held in Copenhagen. He was unwavering in his commitment to seeing a legally binding agreement finally agreed to by all. The adoption of the Durban Platform for Enhanced Action, during the seventeenth Conference of the Parties, was a historic milestone and marked a turning point in the negotiation of a legally binding instrument. It provided a clear road map with targets and deadlines.

On behalf of the people and the Government of South Africa, I would to take this opportunity to salute the outgoing Secretary-General of the United Nations, His Excellency Mr. Ban Ki-moon, for the sterling and outstanding manner in which he steered the affairs of the Organization in the past decade. We wish him well in his future endeavours.

We are pleased that for the first time in the history of the United Nations the General Assembly has been at the centre of the process of finding a new Secretary-General. We believe in a balanced and equal role between the two principal organs of the United Nations on the question of the selection of the Secretary-General. The General Assembly, as the most representative organ, representing all the aspirations of the peoples of the world, should be central in determining the right man or woman to lead the United Nations into the future. The General Assembly cannot be expected just to rubber-stamp decisions of the Security Council. South Africa is particularly supportive of the proposal to limit the term of office of the Secretary-General to a seven-year non-renewable term in order to allow him or her to work without being concerned about reappointment.

South Africa looks forward to working with the President of the General Assembly and other Member States throughout this session.

The Acting President: On behalf of the General Assembly, I wish to thank the President of the Republic of South Africa for the statement he has just made.

Mr. Jacob Zuma, President of the Republic of South Africa, was escorted from the General Assembly Hall.

Address by Mr. Borut Pahor, President of the Republic of Slovenia

The Acting President: The Assembly will now hear an address by the President of the Republic of Slovenia.

Mr. Borut Pahor, President of the Republic of Slovenia, was escorted into the General Assembly Hall.

The Acting President: On behalf of the General Assembly, I have the honour to welcome to the United Nations His Excellency Mr. Borut Pahor, President of the Republic of Slovenia, and to invite him to address the Assembly.

President Pahor: Today, we bear witness to a digital transformation all over the globe. So far, it has been reflected above all in the global economy. However, there is no doubt that, very soon, that transformation will substantially affect every aspect of social life — at the local, regional, and international levels. I was fascinated by the announcement of the United States Department of Labor that 65 per cent

of today's students will be employed in jobs that do not exist at present. It is true that such forecasts are more valid for the most developed countries, but the very essence of the digital transformation is rapidly spreading across the globe.

Be that as it may, such remarkable technological progress should be welcomed. We are filled with hope that, in this way, we can find solutions to unsolved problems. However, like similar changes in the past, today's fourth industrial revolution will bring about new problems and deepen some of the old challenges that humankind is facing.

I will speak first about inequality. Yet the issue of inequality relates not only to the sense of social justice or injustice but increasingly to world peace. Today's world has not yet come to understand, let alone rid itself of, the traditional reasons for the use of force within and between countries. And there is already a new challenge ahead of us, namely, how we should regulate technological progress so that it benefits everyone, and not just a privileged minority. The information revolution has paved the way to a global awareness of social inequalities. I believe that that is one of the main triggers of social conflicts, including in the international community.

The question of legal and any other regulation of the digital transformation is certainly a new issue on the agenda. That also holds true for the most developed countries in the international community. However, the globalization of the digital transformation is occurring so swiftly that it will have to be actively addressed by the United Nations. We will encounter difficulties and obstacles at the beginning, but eventually historic necessity will force us to pool our efforts.

Pooling our efforts in creating effective regulation on climate change proves that we can be successful in our endeavours. It is quite possible that one of the elements of success was the fact that climate change is a major factor of global migration. And as long as migration is not regulated, it will continue to cause the world's paramount security problem. In that sense, migration is yet another catalyst for the international community to find appropriate common solutions.

In any and all contexts, the peaceful resolution of conflicts is absolutely essential. With regard to its fundamental reason for existence, it seems that the United Nations is not effective enough. That should be a further reminder that the Organization ought to adapt to the new circumstances and balance of powers. If the United Nations system is not successful in coping with international conflicts, it risks being sidelined. The use of force as an extreme means of dispute resolution without the necessary endorsement by the United Nations — for example, in the fight against terrorism — risks bringing about the decline of the political and security architecture established after the Second World War.

The next leader of the United Nations is therefore of crucial importance. My country, Slovenia, is proud to have presented Mr. Danilo Türk, our former Head of State and former Assistant Secretary-General for Political Affairs with a decades-long commitment to the United Nations, as a candidate for that eminent post. I am firmly convinced that he is a strong and credible candidate and that it is time that a Secretary-General came from among the Group of Eastern European States.

I like to present my country as smart, green and of just the right size to be a reference country in many different aspects, but Slovenia also stands for democracy, equality and the peaceful resolution of disputes, and it respects international law and principles. We have built our community of nations on respect for international law and on the protection of individuals and their human rights. If we wish our societies to flourish, such duties must never be far from our minds.

My country is also a strong supporter of effective multilateralism and is among those countries that strive to bring the global community closer to universal respect for human rights, promote respect for international law, strengthen the rule of law, foster preventive diplomacy, particularly in the field of mediation, protect peace and security, promote gender equality, protect the elderly, preserve natural resources, implement sustainable development goals and ensure a decent life for all.

Slovenia will promote these principles within the United Nations, including as a member of the Human Rights Council and a candidate for its presidency in 2018, as a current Chair of the Human Security Network and as a member of various informal groupings within the United Nations, as well as within other regional organizations and groupings of which we are members.

After the truly landmark previous session of the General Assembly, it is now time to start implementing the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, which, together with the Paris Agreement on Climate Change,

provides a signpost for and a vision of a more sustainable future for our planet and prosperity for its people.

We will also continue our efforts to have May 20 proclaimed World Bee Day. Our activities during this session of the General Assembly will take place mainly within the context of the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations, and we expect to present a resolution in New York during the Assembly's seventy-second session. We believe that strengthening our common care for bees and other pollinators is needed to ensure food security, biodiversity and sustainable development.

Let me conclude by saying that it was a tremendous privilege to work with the outgoing Secretary-General. I would like to pay tribute to him and to thank him for his determined efforts to promote the United Nations, its values and its goals. We will remember him for his tireless endeavours to make the world a better place. Let us fervently hope that the next Secretary-General will do the same, and even better, for the sake of humanity and of our children and grandchildren.

The Acting President: On behalf of the General Assembly, I wish to thank the President of the Republic of Slovenia for the statement he has just made.

Mr. Borut Pahor, President of the Republic of Slovenia, was escorted from the General Assembly Hall.

Address by Mr. Abdel Fattah Al Sisi, President of the Arab Republic of Egypt

The Acting President: The Assembly will now hear an address by the President of the Arab Republic of Egypt.

Mr. Abdel Fattah Al Sisi, President of the Arab Republic of Egypt, was escorted into the General Assembly Hall.

The Acting President: On behalf of the General Assembly, I have the honour to welcome to the United Nations His Excellency Mr. Abdel Fattah Al Sisi, President of the Arab Republic of Egypt, and to invite him to address the Assembly.

President Al Sisi (*spoke in Arabic*): Allow me at the outset to congratulate President Peter Thomson on having assumed the presidency of the General Assembly at its seventy-first session and to wish him every success. I would also like to express my gratitude to Mr. Mogens Lykketoft, President of the General Assembly at its previous session, for his efforts and contributions.

The current session of the General Assembly comes in the wake of our launching a new phase in our efforts to achieve comprehensive sustainable development, in its environmental, economic and social dimensions, following our adoption of the 2030 Sustainable Development Agenda and the Addis Ababa Action Agenda (resolution 69/313) on financing for development the previous year.

The aspirations of peoples, particularly in the developing world, to a decent standard of living and ongoing progress are without a doubt our primary responsibility as leaders, entrusted to us by our peoples, in line with the principles of humanity that guide us all. However, the challenges that face developing countries, coupled with their limited capacities, prevent the full realization of the Goals set out in the Agenda. Developing countries are not afforded sufficient opportunity to achieve sustainable development; they require a conducive international environment that provides them with a larger share of international trade, financing mechanisms and the transfer of technology, as well as investment flows and debt settlement. They must also have a national environment that is conducive to development.

Egypt calls for support for the role of the State in order to ensure a balance between the different dimensions of sustainable development, particularly in relation to the effectiveness of social security networks and advancing national ownership of development. Egypt also stresses the importance of harnessing the global monetary system to establish a fair global economic system that provides equal opportunities for development and contributes to minimizing the gap between developed and developing countries. The United Nations is the ideal platform to address this issue. Accordingly, Egypt was among the first 22 States to present a voluntary review of its development plans last July.

Last year we reached an agreement based on the principles of the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change. As Coordinator of the Committee of African Heads of State and Government on Climate Change, I reaffirm Africa's commitment to confronting climate change, within the limits of its capabilities, and its aspiration to put into practice the implementation

mechanisms of the agreement on the transfer of technology and sustainable financing. Egypt has established a track for the Renewable Energy Initiative and presented it in the context of its leadership of the Committee of African Heads of State and Government on Climate Change, in implementation of the relevant African Union resolutions.

Egypt wishes to highlight the importance of this initiative in providing support to Africa. Efforts to address climate change must take into consideration equity and the right to development, as well as adherence to the principles of international law, the most important of which is refraining from harm; enhancing cooperation; and the participation of different countries in prospective projects, in accordance with the rules that govern international financial institutions, particularly the World Bank.

The world has become a global village as a result of the positive impact of the communications technology revolution, as well as unimpeded capital flows, investments and global trade. However, we continue to see another facet of globalization, one that has led to a number of social and economic challenges.

Globalization has been linked to an increase in poverty, the expansion of the inequality gap and the undermining of the social contract. These factors combined have exerted pressure on the institutional cohesion of affected countries. These challenges and pressures constitute the greatest incentive for the international community to work diligently to provide State institutions in all countries with the best possible means of undertaking their responsibilities and meeting the needs and aspirations of their peoples.

Amid the challenges facing the international order, the Egyptian people have succeeded in enforcing their will to achieve stability, to protect the State and its institutions and to safeguard their society from fragmentation and chaos. The Egyptian people approved a new Constitution that enshrines the rights and freedoms outlined in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, establishes equality regardless of citizenship and consolidates protection of vulnerable groups, paving the way for women to occupy an unprecedented number of seats in the House of Representatives and expanding its youth representation. The House of Representatives is now actively exercising its legislative authority and oversight responsibilities over the executive authorities.

On the economic front, Egypt is steadily moving forward in implementing an ambitious plan for economic reform that takes into consideration social dimensions and the requisites of a decent livelihood for the Egyptian people. Egypt is also implementing major national projects with an aim of expanding its road network and renewable energy production, as well as increasing agricultural land.

While the Middle East continues to suffer from bloody conflicts, Egypt has managed to preserve its stability in a highly unstable region, thanks to the solidity of its institutions and its people's awareness of their great cultural heritage. The international community must acknowledge and support that fact, to the benefit of the region and the whole world, so that Egypt may continue to act as an anchor of stability in the Middle East, sparing no efforts in carrying out its natural role by working with regional and international parties to restore security and stability in the Middle East.

At the forefront of the bloody conflicts plaguing the region, the agonizing situation in Syria has now reached its sixth year, resulting in hundreds of thousands of deaths and millions more internally displaced people and refugees, both within their homeland and in neighbouring countries. Among them are 500,000 Syrians whom Egypt has welcomed as brothers and sisters, providing them with health care, education and housing. The bloodletting in Syria and the absence of any political prospects on the horizon are no longer acceptable.

What is necessary is clear — an immediate and comprehensive halt to all hostilities throughout Syria, thereby paving the way for a political solution that ends the bloodshed and preserves the territorial integrity and security of Syria and its State institutions, as well as realizing the aspirations of Syrians and putting an end to the chaos that has served only to facilitate the proliferation of terrorism. In that regard, we welcome the latest agreement on cessation of hostilities, which was reached as a result of commendable efforts by Russia and the United States. We hope for swift and serious international action to resume negotiations as soon as possible, in order to reach a comprehensive settlement to the crisis.

Within the same context of our troubled region, the Arab-Israeli conflict continues to be the core of regional instability in the Middle East, necessitating joint efforts by the countries of the region and

the international community to reach a final and comprehensive solution to the conflict. Egypt continues to pursue its best efforts to achieve peace in the region and end the Israeli occupation through negotiations and progress in the peace process in order to reach a final settlement as well as sustainable and just peace, on the basis of a two-State solution. We therefore welcome current efforts based on a genuine desire to improve the situation in Palestinian territories, as the Palestinian people continue to suffer from a state of affairs that must be rectified. There should be a focus on ending the occupation and restoring the rights of the Palestinian people through a peace agreement consistent with resolutions of international legitimacy — one that guarantees Palestinians' right to their own State and achieves security for Israel by normalizing relations in the region.

Egypt reiterates that a hand for peace continues to be extended in the form of the Arab Peace Initiative. Egypt also stresses the need to work to take constructive steps to end Israeli settlement-building and to initiate negotiations for a lasting resolution, while simultaneously halting all acts that bring harm to the Arab heritage in Jerusalem.

Allow me to deviate from my written statement — here at this forum, which represents the voice of the world — to address and appeal to Israeli leaders and the Israeli people to consider the need to find a solution to this question. We have a real opportunity to begin a new chapter in the history of our region and to move towards peace. Egypt's inspiring and unique experience can in fact be replicated by solving the Palestinian problem and establishing a Palestinian State alongside the Israeli State, while preserving peace, security and prosperity for both Israelis and Palestinians.

Libya is currently at a dire juncture and in deep political crisis, which has direct implications for Egyptian national security. Despite the progress achieved last year through the signing at Skhirat of the Libyan Political Agreement, there have been difficulties in its implementation. Egypt is playing an active role in bringing the Libyan parties together and supporting the implementation of the Agreement as a means of regaining the unity of the Libyan State and its authority over its territory and allowing it to operate through its legitimate institutions, as represented by the Presidential Council, the National Unity Government, the House of Representatives and the national army.

Egypt is also hosting meetings of our Libyan brothers to facilitate the implementation of the Skhirat Agreement, as well as the establishment of a national unity Government that represent all Libyans and its ratification by the House of Representatives, so that the country can focus on its reconstruction. That in turn would allow the Libyan army to focus on combating terrorism. In that regard, it is necessary to lift the arms embargo imposed on the army. There is no place for terrorism and militias in Libya. The time has come to restore the institutions of the Libyan State.

In Yemen, Egypt is exerting every effort to support Yemeni territorial integrity and security and the return of the legitimate Government. We support the efforts of the United Nations Special Envoy for Yemen, Ismail Ould Cheikh, and his plan to resolve the crisis, which has been approved by the legitimate Government. We stress the importance of resuming negotiations and for all parties to declare their commitment to the Special Envoy's plan to reach a comprehensive settlement in Yemen in accordance with Security Council resolutions, in particular resolution 2216 (2015). Egypt will continue to support efforts towards a solution and to provide humanitarian assistance to our Yemeni brothers and sisters, in addition to our fundamental role in securing maritime navigation in Bab Al-Mandab and the Red Sea.

The majority of these Arab crises are a reflection of a global state of conflict, and I must reiterate Egypt's rejection of any foreign interference in Arab affairs. I would like to affirm our commitment to the principle of good neighbourliness and to stress Egypt's solidarity with Arab States in facing foreign interventions, in the light of the link between Arab security, including the security of the Arab Gulf.

By the same token, Egypt shoulders its responsibility towards the security and stability of Africa. Egypt currently chairs the Peace and Security Council of the African Union. In that capacity, Egypt is focusing on enhancing cooperation between the African Union and the United Nations in terms of growing transnational threats, including terrorism and organized crime. We aim to bring about a shift in addressing conflicts, on the basis of the principle of national leadership and ownership, to ensure the success of peacebuilding efforts. Through its memberships in both the African Union Peace and Security Council and the United Nations Security Council, Egypt has been keen to enhance coordination between the two

bodies — something Egypt placed at the forefront of its priorities during its chairmanship of the Council. Egypt has sought to support the Peace and Security Architecture in Africa, in particular by way of efforts to operationalize the African Standby Force. Egypt has also increased its participation in United Nations peacekeeping missions in the region, having regained its place as one of the ten largest contributors.

Egypt calls for the adoption of a comprehensive counter-terrorism strategy through an approach that is not limited to security aspects but includes ideological considerations as well. Egypt will host the counter-terrorism centre for the Community of Sahelo-Saharan States.

Egypt would also like to highlight the importance of assessing any rising sources of tension, taking into consideration the phenomena of desertification and water scarcity, and the developmental needs related to managing transnational boundaries in connection with water resources.

With regard to situations in the African continent, Egypt stresses the need to provide the Somali Government with support in order to conclude elections. In Burundi, Egypt seeks to find solutions to the political crisis through the African Union Peace and Security Council and through the United Nations Security Council. We are working to address the crisis in the appropriate manner so as to defuse the political situation and allow all the Burundian parties to intensify peaceful political dialogue, thereby averting the use of violence.

Egypt has sought to participate in the regional framework to address the crisis in South Sudan ever since its inception, engaging with the parties to the conflict, as well as regional and international parties, to achieve peace. Through its current chairmanship of the African Peace and Security Council, Egypt is seeking to increase the role of the Council in that regard, as well as to enhance cooperation with the joint monitoring and evaluation mechanism. Egypt calls for all parties to work within the Transitional Government of National Unity of South Sudan, with the aim of restoring peace to Juba.

Regarding the Republic of the Sudan, Egypt commends the efforts carried out by the Sudanese Government, which have resulted in the signing of the road map proposed by the African Union High-level Implementation Panel last April.

The phenomenon of terrorism and the animus towards the right to life it represents have become an urgent threat to international peace and security. Terrorism constitutes a threat to the entity of the State in favour of extremist ideologies that utilize religion as a veil from behind which to conduct monstrous acts and menace the destinies of peoples. Fighting it requires intensive regional and international cooperation. Egypt has always stressed that the effort to defeat terrorism will never achieve its end unless we address the root causes of the phenomenon, confront terrorist groups with decisiveness and refute the extremist ideologies that give birth to terrorism and its proponents.

I call upon the international community to take all possible measures to prevent terrorism from exploiting advances in information technology, which have contributed to endowing the phenomena of terrorism and ideological extremism with dangerous new dimensions that have given them a global reach. It is essential to end the broadcasting of channels and the hosting of websites that incite violence and extremism.

The world is at a crossroads. Threats to international peace and security are no longer conventional but have rather evolved to constitute a threat to the very tenets of human civilization. In the same vein, the challenges that we face — be they humanitarian, environmental, economic, developmental or health-related — are no longer confined by international borders but have become global. In that regard, I would like to point out that the first preambular paragraph to the Constitution of UNESCO states that "since wars begin in the minds of men, it is in the minds of men that the defences of peace must be constructed".

I assert before the Assembly that terrorism is the cancer of our age, spreading with it the call for extremism and violence in the minds of people. Accordingly, it is our duty to instil in those very same minds the principles of tolerance and coexistence. If culture is the reflection of the principles by which humankind lives, then we must employ culture, technology and knowledge for the benefit of the development of peace.

The United Nations has to give greater attention to addressing the cultural aspects of development and peacemaking and to eliminating destructive ideologies, including through access to knowledge, transfer of technology and confronting extremist ideologies. That must be undertaken in partnership with UNESCO, an organization whose role has grown vastly in importance

in today's world. Egypt recognizes the ever-increasing importance of that role and the importance of taking the utmost advantage of the organization with a view to achieving a better, safer and more understanding world in which there is room for all.

It high time for humankind to reclaim the essence of its humanity, while sharing knowledge and technology without monopolizing them and uniting in the face of challenges. Just as it has always been an eternal accumulation of civilizations, Egypt reaffirms before the General Assembly today its commitment to continuing to contribute to coexistence within the international family and striving for a more secure and prosperous world for our future generations.

The Acting President: On behalf of the General Assembly, I wish to thank the President of the Arab Republic of Egypt for the statement he has just made.

Mr. Abdel Fattah Al Sisi, President of the Arab Republic of Egypt, was escorted from the General Assembly Hall.

Address by Mr. Muhammadu Buhari, President of the Federal Republic of Nigeria

The Acting President: The Assembly will now hear an address by the President of the Federal Republic of Nigeria.

Mr. Muhammadu Buhari, President of the Federal Republic of Nigeria, was escorted into the General Assembly Hall.

The Acting President: On behalf of the General Assembly, I have the honour to welcome to the United Nations His Excellency Mr. Muhammadu Buhari, President of the of the Federal Republic of Nigeria, and to invite him to address the Assembly.

President Buhari: On behalf of the people and the Government of Nigeria, Sir, let me congratulate the President on his well-deserved election as the President of the General Assembly at its seventy-first session. I assure him of Nigeria's support in steering the affairs of the General Assembly over the next 12 months. I also take this opportunity to express my appreciation to his predecessor, Mr. Mogens Lykketoft, for the achievements recorded during his tenure.

Last year, I presented my first address to the General Assembly after my assumption of office as President of the Federal Republic of Nigeria (see A/70/PV.15). Indeed, it was a remarkable year, which not only celebrated the gains of the Millennium Development Goals but also witnessed the adoption of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. These landmark achievements by the global community will without any doubt build a more prosperous, all-inclusive world. We must work together to liberate humankind from poverty, save our planet from the devastation of climate change and rid the world of terrorism for a more peaceful and prosperous future.

We must remain committed to taking bold steps to transform our world. The Sustainable Development Goals underscore the imperative for our collective will towards finding enduring and sustainable solutions to addressing global disparities. It is in the light of our appreciation of the enormity of the task before us that I welcome the theme of the Assembly: "The Sustainable Development Goals: a universal push to transform our world".

Nigeria, as a developing country, has been adversely affected by the global economic downturn. We are, however, undeterred and have embarked upon a wide range of reforms in our efforts to diversify our economy and shift emphasis to mining, agriculture, industrialization, infrastructure development and the creation of an enabling environment for foreign direct investment. Our strategic objective is to stimulate the economy, restore growth and accelerate recovery. In doing that, we are taking measures to reduce the cost of governance and increase expenditure on infrastructure and ensure environmental best practices.

Fighting corruption remains a cardinal pillar of our Administration. Corruption freezes development, thereby undermining the achievement of the Sustainable Development Goals. I am pleased that our efforts in fighting corruption are yielding positive results, including significant recoveries of stolen assets. The recovered funds are being channelled towards the development of critical infrastructure and the implementation of social inclusion programmes for our people. We are also strengthening the capacity of Government entities to institutionalize reforms to ensure transparency and good governance.

The Anti-Corruption Summit held in London in May this year served as further assurance of the global community's commitment to fight corruption through the proposed practical steps to address the challenges, including actions to hold perpetrators to justice within

the law. Nigeria supports the development of an international legal framework to enforce anti-corruption measures and strengthen existing international institutions to effectively deal with corrupt practices.

Nigeria calls on Member States that are yet to sign up to the United Nations Convention against Corruption to do so. Nigeria will continue to advocate for the facilitation of the recovery of illicit financial assets. Indeed, the speedy and unconditional return of stolen public assets should be the focus of the follow-up anti-corruption conference, to be hosted by the United States and United Kingdom next year in Washington, D.C.

Furthermore, Nigeria remains committed to the Extractive Industries Transparency Initiative, a global coalition that promotes transparency and accountability in the management of revenues from the oil, gas and solid minerals sectors. We voluntarily signed up to the Initiative because we are convinced that transparent governance is an imperative for resource-rich developing countries like ours. Through the work that our national chapter of the Extractive Industries Transparency Initiative has done over the years, it is clear that our faith is not misplaced. The Initiative has been empowering citizens with the critical information they can use to hold Government and other players in the extractive industries to account, and make recommendations that drive reforms in those strategic sectors of our national life.

The world took a giant step in Paris towards addressing the challenges of climate change. Nigeria is proud to have been part of the process leading to the adoption of the Paris Agreement in December 2015 at the twenty-first meeting of the Conference of the Parties to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change. That meeting marked a watershed in the global community's commitment to address climate change, and we will continue in our determined efforts to reduce greenhouse-gas emissions. At the centre of Nigeria's climate action is our determination to implement the strategies in our intended nationally determined contributions, which will foster a low-carbon economy and sustainable growth in building a climate-resilient society. We are creating public awareness through the integrated involvement of the private sector and civil society and by strengthening national institutions and mechanisms.

The negative consequences of climate change have manifested themselves in the drying up of our Lake Chad. The means of livelihood of an estimated 30 million inhabitants of the Lake Chad Basin — spread across Cameroon, Chad, the Niger and Nigeria — are being severely threatened. The cost of replenishing the lake has been put at $14 billion, under a five-year plan that should be accorded global attention. Nigeria also supports the African Union initiative on the Great Green Wall to halt desertification.

In furtherance of our commitment to environmental sustainability, Nigeria has launched the Clean Up Ogoniland initiaitve in Nigeria's Niger Delta, based on the 2011 environmental assessment of the area by the United Nations Environment Programme. Multinational oil companies operating in the area will be required to live up to their corporate social responsibilities and contribute to the cleaning-up of the environment, degraded as a result of their activities and operations. We call on development partners and multinationals to support our efforts through the Ogoniland Restoration Fund.

The twenty-first century has thus far been marked by the rising insecurity unleashed by global terrorism and violent extremism, which constitute a real threat to the international community. With the global increase in the spate of terrorist attacks, there is now, more than ever, international consensus and greater willingness to collaborate in combating the threat. Indeed, we are meeting at the time when our hosts, the American people, have just marked the fifteenth anniversary of the tragic and dastardly terrorist attacks on their soil. We in Nigeria, having been victims of terrorism ourselves, fully understand the impact of 9/11 on the American psyche and the families of the thousands of innocent victims whose lives were lost that day. I therefore reiterate the sympathies of the Nigerian Government and the Nigerian people to the American people, along with prayers for the families of the victims that they may heal and find closure soon.

We hope that justice will be done for the families of victims of 9/11, as indeed to the victims of terror everywhere, in conformity with the norms of international justice. As we seek justice for terrorism victims, the international community should avoid reacting in the heat of the deep emotions of the moment by taking unilateral measures, legal or otherwise, that will have a negative and disruptive impact on the international community's collective efforts to fight

terrorism. We should not be distracted in our collective resolve to beat back terrorism in all its forms.

As we confront terrorism, we must also commit to stopping the proliferation of small arms and light weapons, which nurtures its spread. To that end, Nigeria urges Member States that are yet to sign and ratify the Arms Trade Treaty to do so without further delay.

Nigeria has made remarkable progress in its resolve to defeat Boko Haram, whose capacity to launch orchestrated attacks as a formed group has been severely degraded. In the past few months, their operations have been limited to sporadic use of improvised explosive devices against soft targets.

Nigeria has continued to combat terrorism on the basis of the established rules of engagement and in conformity with international best practices. I take this opportunity to reaffirm Nigeria's commitment to human rights norms and international humanitarian law in our efforts to counter terrorism and violent extremism. I also wish to restate the assurance that the Federal Government of Nigeria is employing all its judicial tools to investigate and address reported cases of human rights violations.

I commend the contributions of our neighbours — the Republic of Benin, the Republic of Cameroon, the Republic of Chad and the Republic of the Niger — whose combined efforts under the Multinational Joint Task Force accomplished the present return of normalcy in areas hitherto occupied by Boko Haram. May I also thank our international partners — including France, the United States of America, the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland, Germany, the United Nations, the Economic Community of West African States and the African Union — and many other multilateral and bilateral partners for their invaluable support. Our experience today is proof that, with determined international collaboration, terrorism can be defeated.

The flow of refugees and migrants worldwide has reached alarming proportions. That is why Nigeria supports the ceasefire agreement brokered by the United States and Russia to end the atrocious tragedy of the Syrian civil war. Of particular concern to us in Nigeria is the plight of internally displaced persons resulting from Boko Haram's terrorism. We have taken concrete steps to address their humanitarian needs and to ensure that the necessary conditions are established to enable the voluntary return of the displaced persons to their places of abode in safety and dignity.

At the same time, the Palestinian issue, despite years and years of international efforts, is no nearer to being resolved. Nigeria, in company with States members of the African Union, firmly supports the two-State solution, with Palestinian rights to statehood in conformity with numerous Security Council resolutions, beginning with resolution 242 (1967).

Let me take this opportunity to once again thank all United Nations and other aid agencies and development partners currently deployed in north-east Nigeria. I reaffirm Nigeria's commitment to collective action towards an effective global response to address the root causes of refugee flows worldwide.

We acknowledge the importance of youth in national development and remain committed to harnessing the potential of the increasing youth bulge. We must take advantage of the numbers and creative energy of young people, who are in the majority in Nigeria and in most other Member States. Therefore, at the international level, we call for the establishment of a specialized United Nations agency for youth development to achieve that strategic objective.

Nuclear security remains central to our quest for durable peace and security. That was why I participated in the fifth Nuclear Security Summit, hosted by President Barak Obama in Washington in March 2016. Nigeria and the other peace-loving States Members of the United Nations must continue to uphold the fundamental principles of nuclear disarmament, non-proliferation and the peaceful uses of nuclear energy.

The United Nations should now redouble the long-protracted effort for its reform to enable it to effectively address the challenges of our times. Nigeria therefore reiterates its call for the reform of the Security Council, in particular to reflect equitable and fair representation and greater transparency, legitimacy and inclusiveness in its decision-making. Africa should be adequately represented on the Security Council in the permanent-member category. In that regard, Nigeria stands ready to serve Africa and the world on a reformed Security Council to advance international peace and security.

Let me conclude by reaffirming Nigeria's abiding faith in the United Nations and in its capacity to support Member States to deliver on the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development.

The Acting President: On behalf of the General Assembly, I wish to thank the President of the Federal Republic of Nigeria for the statement he has just made.

Mr. Muhammadu Buhari, President of the Federal Republic of Nigeria, was escorted from the General Assembly Hall.

Address by Mr. Yoweri Kaguta Museveni, President of the Republic of Uganda

The Acting President: The Assembly will now hear an address by the President of the Republic of Uganda.

Mr. Yoweri Kaguta Museveni, President of the Republic of Uganda, was escorted into the General Assembly Hall.

The Acting President: On behalf of the General Assembly, I have the honour to welcome to the United Nations His Excellency Mr. Yoweri Kaguta Museveni, President of the Republic of Uganda, and to invite him to address the Assembly.

President Museveni: I would like to congratulate the President on his election as President of the General Assembly at its seventy-first session.

The theme for this session is "The Sustainable Development Goals: a universal push to transform our world". This is a good topic. It adds another nail in the coffin of the old parasitic arrangement where only a small portion of humankind — those living in the United States of America, Canada, Western Europe, Australia and New Zealand — lived in affluence while the rest of the world lived in abject poverty.

The reasoning then was that one could not be affluent without doing so at the expense of somebody else. This logic has now been challenged. Between 1981 and 2010, 380 million and 270 million people in China and India, respectively, came out of poverty. Even in Africa, a continent with a lot of accumulated disadvantages, 414 million people have come out of poverty. In Uganda's case, in 2004 56 per cent of its people were living in poverty. Today that figure is 19 per cent. It is hoped that by 2017, it will be reduced to 10 per cent.

Is the world not a better place with the spread of affluence? Have not the old affluent societies and the new ones both benefited? The United States is today exporting goods and services to China worth $120 billion per year. The European Union is exporting goods and services to China worth $356 billion. Has not the spread of affluence benefited more people?

The Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) understood this very well. There are 17 of them, and they are: to end poverty in all its forms everywhere, to end hunger, to ensure healthy lives, to ensure inclusive and equitable quality education and to promote lifelong learning opportunities for all, to achieve gender equality and so forth. I do not have to read out all 17 SDGs because representatives know them.

All this is a different way of providing a prescription for the problems of underdevelopment. We are happy at last. The global agenda includes most of the ingredients necessary for growth and the transformation of societies, as happened in the past for those societies that pioneered the Industrial Revolution. In particular, the inclusion of energy on the list of SDGs is a departure from past global agendas.

These SDGs fluctuate with many of our own 10 strategic bottlenecks. These are ideological disorientation; a weak State, especially the army, which needed restructuring; the suppression of the private sector; the underdevelopment of human resources, that is, a lack of education and health; the underdevelopment of infrastructure, that is, the railways, roads, electricity, telephones and piped water and so forth; a small internal market; the lack of industrialization; the underdevelopment of the services sector; the underdevelopment of agriculture and the attack on democracy.

As the Assembly can see, there are two crucial bottlenecks that are missing in the SDGs. These are ideological disorientation, which for us is bottleneck number one, and market integration, which is bottleneck number six. One can of course say that the idea of ideological disorientation is subsumed in SDG 16 — that of peace, justice and strong institutions. Nevertheless, there is no harm in singling out and highlighting this problem of the pseudo-ideology that exploits the identities of people — of religion, tribe, race, gender and so forth — and eclipses the interests of the people, such as balanced trade. That equal relationship between the producer of a good and the producer of a service and the buyer of the same, both in ancient and modern times, is the greatest stimulus for global prosperity.

This, however, is many times eclipsed by the shallow promotion of the chauvinism of religion, tribe, race or gender, even when one's religion mates, tribe

mates and race mates are doing nothing or little for one's prosperity. Yet the recent growth through trade of China, India and so forth in their interaction with the United States of America, the European Union, Africa and so forth shows the power of the stimulus. Let the global body therefore understand and blacklist the pseudo-ideology of the sectarianism and chauvinism of groups. All the past mistakes and the present ones are linked to this problem. Imperialism, the slave trade, colonialism, neocolonialism, the ongoing sectarian conflicts in many parts of the world — all, in one way or another, spring from this pseudo-ideology. The fair and authentic ideology of being my brother's keeper, as it says in the Book of Genesis — chapter 4, verse 9 — is the true antidote to this poison. Abandon all forms of chauvinism and the world will be safer for everybody. In my dialect we say, "The one who shoots arrows at others should expect arrows to come his way".

Finally, our sixth bottleneck — the bottleneck of fragmented markets in Africa and possibly in other places — should also be addressed. It has eased its trade with China, with India, with the United States, with Russia, with Brazil and Indonesia, because they are markets of $1.3 billion, $1.2 billion, $150 million, $200 million and $200 million, respectively, because they are societies under one political authority each. We and the others that have fragmented markets must struggle to rectify this deficiency.

Mr. Zamora Rivas (El Salvador), Vice-President, took the Chair.

In Africa, we are already moving forward. Hence, our East African Community, the Common Market for Eastern and Southern Africa, the Southern African Development Community, the Economic Community of West African States and, ultimately, the common market of the whole of Africa, as we agreed recently, in Kigali. These markets are taking us in the right direction. Remember that when I buy what is produced by your factories, I am supporting your prosperity; and when you buy what I produce, you are supporting my prosperity. Long live the SDGs. But, please, do not forget to add the bottlenecks that we observed here.

The Acting President (*spoke in Spanish*): On behalf of the General Assembly, I wish to thank the President of the Republic of Uganda for the statement he has just made.

Mr. Yoweri Kaguta Museveni, President of the Republic of Uganda, was escorted from the General Assembly Hall.

The meeting rose at 6.20 p.m.

United Nations A 71/PV.10

General Assembly

Seventy-first session

Official Records

10th plenary meeting
Tuesday, 20 September 2016, 6.20 p.m.
New York

President: Mr. Thomson ..... (Fiji)

In the absence of the President, Mr. Zamora Rivas (El Salvador), Vice-President, took the Chair.

The meeting was called to order at 6.20 p.m.

Address by Mr. Marcelo Rebelo de Sousa, President of the Republic of Portugal

The Acting President (*spoke in Spanish*): The Assembly will now hear an address by the President of the Republic of Portugal.

Mr. Marcelo Rebelo de Sousa, President of the Republic of Portugal, was escorted into the General Assembly Hall.

The Acting President (*spoke in Spanish*): On behalf of the General Assembly, I have the honour to welcome to the United Nations His Excellency Mr. Marcelo Rebelo de Sousa, President of the Republic of Portugal, and to invite him to address the Assembly.

President Rebelo de Sousa: First of all, I would like to congratulate the President of the General Assembly, Mr. Peter Thomson, on his election and commend him for the theme chosen for the seventy-first session of the General Assembly. Following the success a year ago of the adoption of the Sustainable Development Goals, we need a universal push to transform our world. The General Assembly may rest assured that it can count on Portugal's committed contribution. I would also like to extend Portugal's recognition to the Secretary-General, Mr. Ban Ki-moon, for his capacity for dialogue, vision for the future and commitment to promoting a more efficient United Nations.

(spoke in Portuguese. English text provided by the delegation)

In an increasingly complex world, the Organization will always be an irreplaceable institution in the eyes of its Members. I therefore reiterate Portugal's unwavering and enduring commitment to the United Nations, the Charter and its guiding purposes and principles, as well as its strict respect for international law. The historic agreements, on the Sustainable Development Goals and climate change, reached in 2015 and 2016, respectively, the World Humanitarian Summit and the General Assembly special session on the world drug problem were all major achievements that exemplified effective, United Nations-centred multilateralism.

The General Assembly's special session on the world drug problem, held in April, was an important step forward taken by the international community to realize an integrated and humanist vision. Having held such a vision for over a decade, Portugal regards it as the necessary and successful global response. In this as in other domains, we must now make additional efforts and focus primarily on prevention.

A culture of prevention should also be developed in the area of maintaining peace and security by promoting sustainable development and respect for human rights, with the ultimate aim of safeguarding human dignity, relieving suffering and ending poverty. To this end, I would like to highlight this year's review of the United Nations peace and security architecture, including the women and peace and security dimension. It provided an opportunity to reinforce United Nations preventive

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capabilities. For example, strengthening preventive action in Africa is essential to prevent many of the crises the continent is facing from developing, while respecting African ownership of the processes. Portugal will continue to contribute to this effort, in particular by deploying military contingents in such peacekeeping operations as the United Nations Multidimensional Integrated Stabilization Mission in Mali and the United Nations Multidimensional Integrated Stabilization Mission in the Central African Republic.

It is also worth noting our commitment to promoting maritime security in the Gulf of Guinea, as can be seen in our current presidency of the Group of Seven Group of Friends of the Gulf of Guinea. We continue to support Guinea-Bissau and we are confident that constructive political dialogue will be undertaken to reach a sustainable solution within the constitutional framework in order to meet the legitimate aspirations of the Guinean people. We also believe that a meeting of the International Contact Group on Guinea-Bissau needs to be held with the utmost urgency in order to reassert the international community's consensus in favour of long-awaited structural reforms.

On the other side of the Atlantic, we welcomed the talks held in Havana, which led to a peace agreement for Colombia, one of Portugal's partners at Ibero-American summits. That agreement paves the way for national reconciliation among all Colombians, which will allow them to live together in peace and in respect for the rule of law and the views of others. We will participate in the peacekeeping process by contributing personnel to the prospective United Nations mission, as well as financially through the European Union Trust Fund for Colombia.

It is the Israeli-Palestinian issue, however, that demonstrates that there is still a way to go in terms of peacebuilding. That is why I would reiterate Portugal's support for international efforts aimed at bringing about the resumption of peace talks. We hope that United Nations resolutions can provide a basis for a sustainable solution to the conflict with a view to ensuring the existence of a sovereign, independent and viable Palestinian State living side by side with the State of Israel, whose legitimate security aspirations must be guaranteed.

Furthermore, we are also very concerned about the recent escalation of threats to security and stability on the Korean peninsula, which we condemn. We call for resumed collaboration among neighbours and the international community aimed at having the Democratic People's Republic of Korea suspend its nuclear programme.

From the subway station in Brussels to Mogadishu airport, from a club in Orlando to Quetta hospital in Pakistan, the pure inhumanity of these terrorist attacks is not just against the targeted countries and the victims; rather, it is against all those who endorse the principles and values of the United Nations Charter — the 193 States gathered here today — and it is against humankind as a whole. Terrorism cannot be tolerated. The United Nations, through its mandate from the international community, has the lawful right and the moral duty to end this scourge, and specifically one of its major proponents, Da'esh. We shall not give in to fear, nor shall we forfeit our values or principles, particularly with regard to human rights. It is through the values of peace, tolerance, human dignity and solidarity that we should fight radicalization and violent extremism, as well as the xenophobia and demagogic populism that threaten our societies.

The Middle East, North Africa and Europe are confronting a humanitarian crisis of tragic proportions resulting from the exodus of refugees and migrants, many of whom are very young children. We must get to the root of the problem and eradicate the terror and fear that have befallen the region, finding a politically sustainable solution for the conflict in Syria based on the recently negotiated ceasefire.

Another issue underlying this humanitarian crisis is the growing wave of immigration that is essentially the result of a lack of opportunities in the migrants' countries of origin. Resolving conflicts, stabilizing political situations and investing in countries' development are surely the best way to contribute to the stability and prosperity of all. Portugal has turned the willingness it expressed from the beginning of the crisis into the act of hosting migrants who need international protection. We have gone far beyond the European Union quota set out for us. Indeed, we have accepted twice the number of migrants than required under this quota. We will continue to take in these migrants and abide by the effective integration practices that characterize the welcoming and multicultural Portuguese society.

I would like to stress the importance of promoting higher education for refugees in emergency situations

so that a generation of migrants is not lost. Portugal has already accepted over 100 Syrian university students and calls for similar involvement on the part of many other countries. I myself am a university professor, and I have taught students from Syria.

With regard to the right to education, I would recall that 50 years ago the General Assembly adopted the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights and the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights. I call on all Member States that have not yet done so to join these important instruments.

In addition, on the issue of human rights, we have come a long way in terms of gender equality, although much still needs to be done. Gender issues are a topic of cross-cutting importance, particularly in the context of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and the women and peace and security agenda. Furthermore, as a member of the Human Rights Council, Portugal remains committed to the defence and promotion of human rights and the strengthening of bodies set up by human rights treaties.

The issue of oceans and seas is a priority for Portugal. History advises it, geography imposes it and the future demands it. In this regard, I would mention the Oceans Meeting 2016, which we hosted in Lisbon earlier this year. We will continue to work towards mobilizing global efforts aimed at the conservation and sustainable exploitation of the oceans. Accordingly, Portugal is looking forward to being an engaged participant at the first United Nations Conference to Support the Implementation of Sustainable Development Goal 14, on oceans, seas and marine resources, which will be held in New York in 2017. Furthermore, with regard to the link to climate change, I reiterate Portugal's commitment to small island developing States in supporting the efforts needed to overcome the challenges they face, which are the responsibility of the international community as a whole.

Finally, as the process of appointing the next Secretary-General is under way, I would like to express my sincerest wish that whoever takes up this position has the human and professional qualities required to meet the challenge. He or she should possess the ability to bring together hearts and minds and embody the values and courses of action that Mahatma Gandhi and Nelson Mandela exemplified in their lives. We need someone who transcends their group or circle, uniting and representing everyone and not just a chosen few, who will build bridges, listen and demonstrate the innate wisdom and leadership skills to make decisions with which everyone can identify and in which everyone feels included.

As Vergílio Ferreira, a great Portuguese writer, said, "Mine is the language of the sea." The Portuguese language is shared by 250 million speakers, represented by the nine States members of the Community of Portuguese-speaking Countries, which celebrates its twentieth anniversary this year, inspired, therefore, by the ocean — to some it is the Atlantic, to others it is the Pacific — which brings life to the planet and unites us all, I have come to address the General Assembly today. I wish the Assembly every success in the seventy-first session that we are now launching, reiterating that we support new President of the Assembly and welcome his leadership. Portugal's position is, has been and always will be to provide firm, enthusiastic support to the United Nations as it fulfils its role in building peace, liberty, development and justice throughout the world.

The Acting President *(spoke in Spanish)*: On behalf of the General Assembly, I wish to thank the President of the Republic of Portugal for the statement he has just made.

Mr. Marcelo Rebelo de Sousa, President of the Republic of Portugal, was escorted from the General Assembly Hall.

Address by Mr. Enrique Peña Nieto, President of the United Mexican States

The Acting President *(spoke in Spanish)*: The Assembly will now hear an address by the President of the United Mexican States.

Mr. Enrique Peña Nieto, President of the United Mexican States, was escorted into the General Assembly Hall.

The Acting President *(spoke in Spanish)*: On behalf of the General Assembly, I have the honour to welcome to the United Nations His Excellency Mr. Enrique Peña Nieto, President of the United Mexican States, and to invite him to address the Assembly.

President Peña Nieto *(spoke in Spanish)*: It is an honour and a privilege to stand here once again at this high rostrum at the United Nations, the home of universal peace, cooperation and brotherhood. Mexico has always been a staunch ally of the United Nations and a nation that firmly believes in its transformative

power. From this Hall, vital collective efforts have been undertaken in pursuit of humankind's noblest causes.

For over seven decades, global voices have called for a better future. Each generation has taken on the challenges of its time with determination. It is incumbent upon us to continue in the same spirit to confront the enormous challenge of making sustainable development of the planet a reality. We have already taken the first step in that direction, specifically by defining the Sustainable Development Goals. The 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, which we formulated and agreed on here at the United Nations, is without a doubt the boldest, noblest and most demanding action plan that the international community has adopted in recent history. It is a road map for national and subnational Governments, just as it is for all of society's stakeholders that have the mission of improving the lives of billions of people and leaving no one behind. Because of its scope and goals, the 2030 Agenda is the framework that harmonizes the agreements reached last year in the areas of human rights, environment and sustainable peace.

What have the national efforts of Mexico been in this arena? First of all, we have taken on the implementation of the 2030 Agenda as a national commitment. Along the same lines, work is under way to establish a high-level council for the implementation of the 2030 Agenda, which will be headed by the President of the republic. Its purpose will be to coordinate the work of the various stakeholders, including local authorities, lawmakers, and representatives of civil society, academia and the private sector. Mexico has also set up a specialized technical committee composed of the main federal institutions, tasked with measuring and monitoring the Agenda's indicators. Similarly, we are creating a public monitoring dashboard in order to transparently share our successes and remaining challenges with the public. As part of that commitment to transparency and accountability, Mexico was one of the 22 countries that on 19 July presented their voluntary national review documents to the high-level political forum.

Mexico is also committed to promoting the implementation of the 2030 Agenda at the regional level. In April next year we will chair the Forum of the Countries of Latin American and the Caribbean on Sustainable Development. Given that human rights are now a cross-cutting element in the 2030 Agenda, my country has adopted a national social inclusion strategy focused on ensuring the full enjoyment of social rights, thereby reducing poverty and increasing equality.

We applaud the recognition in the 2030 Agenda of migrants as subjects of rights and as vital allies in the development of their countries of destination and origin. As I stated yesterday at the plenary meeting (see A/71/PV.4B), Mexico will work actively for the creation of agreements on migration and refugees. To that end, we have offered to host an international preparatory meeting for reaching a better definition of the global compact for safe, orderly and regular migration. In the face of these challenges, we should leave behind our indifference and promote the shared responsibility and joint action of the international community with regard to migrants and refugees.

Another cross-cutting theme of the 2030 Agenda is gender perspective and the empowerment of women. In keeping with the commitments of last year's Global Leaders' Meeting on Gender Equality and Women's Empowerment: A Commitment to Action, Mexico now has a more robust institutional framework in its national system for equality between women and men. The fact that that system is headed by Mexico's President ensures that the policy of equality is upheld at the highest level and is reflected in the national Government's actions.

Additionally, driven by a sense of urgency, Mexico has adopted the Paris Agreement on Climate Change. A few days ago my country's Ssenate ratified that international treaty, which will be submitted for entry into force at tomorrow's high-level meeting. Our priority now is to develop national mechanisms to coordinate, verify and report on compliance with the commitments assumed under that agreement.

We must henceforward change the way we live, produce and consume. We must harmonize economic development with social inclusion and environmental protection. One example of that balance can be seen in my country's energy reform, which includes a law of energy transition whereby, by 2018, 25 per cent of its electric energy will be generated using clean sources, reaching 70 per cent by 2040. Similarly, at the regional level, the three North American nations have committed to reducing our oil and gas sectors' methane emissions by between 40 and 45 per cent by 2025.

As part of its global responsibility to the environment, Mexico will host the thirteenth Conference of the Parties to the Convention on Biological Diversity, to be held in December. That forum seeks to align actions to

protect and preserve our natural heritage with the Aichi Biodiversity Targets and those of the 2030 Agenda. By the same token, next year we will host the Global Platform for Disaster Risk Reduction, which will assess the first two years of the Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction and will set goals for reducing and mitigating development risks.

Thirdly, Mexico has reaffirmed its pacifist vocation and its commitment to achieving sustainable global peace. The international community has confirmed that the stability of countries affected by armed conflict depends not only on their security conditions, but also on their respect for human rights, on the effectiveness of their institutions and the rule of law, and on their ability to foster inclusive development. This cross-cutting vision is fully in line with the Sustainable Development Goals. In that regard, the Goals are key to preventing and avoiding social and political crises and will also be crucial to finding peaceful solutions to the armed conflicts in many countries.

The most recent example is the peace agreement reached in Colombia. Mexico applauds that achievement, and we will show our solidarity with the attainment of its goals. Similarly, in the pursuit of reduced tension and greater understanding in our region, Mexico repeats its call for the lifting of the economic, trade and financial blockade imposed upon Cuba.

If peace is to last, it must be sustainable. To that end, the new paradigm entails focusing efforts on conflict prevention and using a proactive, strategic and long-term approach. We recognize that one of the greatest threats is the existence of nuclear weapons. Historically, Mexico has been a proponent of disarmament and has emphatically condemned nuclear tests. We will continue to work towards a world free of that global threat.

I would like to take this opportunity to recognize the positive work of Mr. Ban Ki-moon at the head of the United Nations Secretariat. Mexico appreciates his dedication and commitment. Thanks to his vision and leadership, agreements of great importance for the future of the planet have been reached in recent years. That is no minor feat, especially given the highly volatile and complex international context in which he has had to perform his duties.

In recent decades, the world has made great progress, including major improvements in the quality of the lives of millions of people. Even so, it is also true that many societies are clearly dissatisfied with their current conditions. That situation creates a divide between citizens and their authorities, which fuels mistrust in institutions and heightens uncertainty about the future. In Latin America, for example, the the clear deterioration in public support for democracy revealed by the Latinobarómetro survey is extremely grave. Faced with that challenge, the world cannot fall into the trap of demagoguery or authoritarianism.

The only viable path ahead, the only true response to a demanding citizenry, is democracy itself. The response must be more openness, more transparency and better accountability. As Governments, we must be able to listen to and to deal with an increasingly well-informed citizenry that has more means at its disposal for expressing opinions and participating in public affairs. Social networks are enabling greater public participation, turning each individual into a potential agent for change.

In that context, Governments must make greater efforts to better communicate with the societies they serve. Governments must communicate to publicize achievements, to recognize and explain missteps, but above all to map out the road ahead together with their societies. It is essential that we promote public debate, contrast ideas and assume shared commitments, using the new communication technologies that are increasingly available and accessible to the entire population. Let us recognize in our pluralism and ongoing dialogue the ideal tools for building in democracy a better future. The response to disillusionment with democracy lies in democracy itself. Our Governments must foster societies that are increasingly inclusive and participatory, where all citizens enjoy the benefits of development.

Going forward, we already have a clearly defined road map, based on the Sustainable Development Goals. These are very clear Goals for overcoming poverty and ensuring equal opportunity, gender equity, protection of the environment and justice and peace on which all our countries must concentrate our efforts. Mexico reaffirms its strong commitment to democratic principles as the only path to achieving the Sustainable Development Goals.

The Acting President (*spoke in Spanish*): On behalf of the General Assembly, I wish to thank the President of the United Mexican States for the statement he has just made.

Mr. Enrique Peña Nieto, President of the United Mexican States, was escorted from the General Assembly Hall.

Address by His Majesty Don Felipe VI, King of the Kingdom of Spain

The Acting President (*spoke in Spanish*): The Assembly will now hear an address by the King of the Kingdom of Spain.

His Majesty Don Felipe VI, King of the Kingdom of Spain, was escorted into the General Assembly Hall.

The Acting President (*spoke in Spanish*): On behalf of the General Assembly, I have the honour to welcome to the United Nations His Majesty Don Felipe VI, King of the Kingdom of Spain, and to invite him to address the Assembly.

King Felipe (*spoke in Spanish*): Two years ago, I addressed the General Assembly for the first time as King of Spain (see A/69/PV.6). I feel at present the same honour and the same responsibility as I did on that occasion, because the United Nations is the universal forum for peace and progress for humankind, the place where we must secure the future of our planet.

That is how the Spanish people understand the demands on us. Today, we cannot disappoint the billions of people who, like Spanish society, believe in the purposes, principles and values of the 1945 San Francisco Charter and of the 2015 Declaration on the occasion of the seventieth anniversary of the United Nations that Spain helped to promote in defence of what the United Nations represents. With that Declaration, we wanted to tell the world that the Charter was not simply a beacon that lit the dark times of the past, but that it also illuminates our present and our future. For it is the beacon to which the children in refugee camps direct their eyes, as do the mothers who protect their children while crossing the Mediterranean — a plight which deeply moves us. It is the hope for those who have lost loved ones owing to natural disasters or hunger, those who defend human rights and common human dignity, and those who are persecuted as victims of terrorism in all its despicable forms. It is also the inspiration for the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, to which we have all committed ourselves with a view to putting an end to hunger and extreme poverty and to designing a model for development that is sustainable in the course of a generation.

For Spain, the 2030 Agenda is a source of inspiration for our domestic and foreign actions. We must fight inequality and work towards an economic model that fosters shared prosperity and provides employment opportunities for young people and, in general, for all those who have suffered most from the impact of the crisis in recent years. No one should be left behind because of what we do or fail to do.

In order to advance the cause that concerns us all, combating the effects of climate change is critical. I am pleased to underline that, nearly a year ago in Paris, we were able to reach a crucial agreement in this matter. Our compliance is an unavoidable priority for us all, and one on which we will be called to account by present and future generations. The upcoming twenty-second session of the Conference of the Parties to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change, to be held in Morocco, will offer an excellent opportunity to further strengthen our commitment.

Finally, the Charter today serves as a beacon for Colombia. The Spanish people welcome the peace agreement reached in that beloved country, which has the strong support of our Government on both the bilateral and the multilateral level. Our Congress of Deputies has unanimously supported it. Spain will stand beside the Colombian people so that they can achieve the fruits of peace for all Colombians, who will have the last word in the plebiscite scheduled for 2 October.

The European, Ibero-American and Mediterranean dimensions that constitute the identity of the Spanish people testify to our universal vocation. We are amon the countries that have had the greatest impact on history, and we are proud of our substantial contribution to the common heritage of humankind.

This year, we celebrate the 400th anniversary of the death of Cervantes, a universally acknowledged literary genius, who was able to convey his belief that portraying a noble and generous spirit is the best way to live in the world. For us, the children of Cervantes, knowing how to live means, above all else, knowing how to live with others. When we coexist in a democratic framework that safeguards our hard-won rights and freedoms, together with our respect for our diversity, that is when we give the best of ourselves and contribute in more and better ways to the peace, security and prosperity of the international community, as we will continue to do.

All advanced democracies, such as ours, go through difficult times at some point in their history. But they come through them thanks to the strength and unity of their societies, the robustness of their institutions and the effectiveness of their system of freedoms, and thanks to the firm belief that differences must be resolved in accordance with rules that have been laid down. In recent decades, the Spanish people have, with a constructive spirit, demonstrated that they have embraced the values of dialogue, commitment, sense of duty and solidarity. Those are the values that transform nations into models for freedom around the world and promote the progress and well-being of their citizens.

Spaniards have always come through difficult times, even after being hit by a severe global economic crisis, during which our society showed an enormous capacity to overcome adversity. We must continue to drive and reinforce the recovery on a firm, broad-based foundation, as well as to safeguard and improve the welfare state and a model of genuinely sustainable growth, diversifying our foreign presence and, above all, giving special attention to those who have suffered most and who continue to suffer the repercussions of the recession.

The Kingdom of Spain's membership in the Security Council during the 2015-2016 biennium shows that our country is shouldering its responsibilities, meeting its commitments and participating constructively in the quest for solutions to the problems we face today, such as the large movements of people that are a shocking sign of our times and are being given special attention during a week of ministerial meetings. Spain is on the homestretch of its mandate in the Security Council and is working with determination, accountability and transparency, guided by the desire to make acceptable and effective commitments to prevent conflicts and resolve existing ones. We have spearheaded efforts in the humanitarian field and are encouraging the increased participation of women in both conflict prevention and peacebuilding, thereby combating gross violations and abuses of their freedom and dignity. In the immediate future and within the framework of an open and inclusive process, we will seek the adoption of a resolution to prevent non-State actors and terrorists from having access to weapons — especially those with mass destruction capabilities that increase their ability to carry out assaults or attacks. We will also attempt to move forward international judicial cooperation against terrorism and step up measures against sexual violence in conflict.

During this period in the Security Council, we have faced crises every day that stir our conscience and about which, despite much frustration, we refuse to become apathetic. Five and a half years of conflict in Syria have led to the death of more than 300,000 people, brought about the forced disappearance of more than half of Syria's people and divided the country, leaving it at serious risk of irreversible fragmentation. The stability of the entire region has been threatened, especially that of neighbouring nations, whose generosity in hosting Syrian refugees should be acknowledged. We regret the breach of the ceasefire agreement, and we express our sympathy for the victims, especially those who were humanitarian workers. We hope and call for another cessation of hostilities. In that context, Spain is working to improve humanitarian assistance. There is no military solution to the conflict, and the political solution must preserve the unity of the country in an inclusive, democratic framework.

Iraq suffers the ravages of terrorism at the hands of Da'esh, which is already retreating thanks to the perseverance of the Iraqi Government and the support of an international coalition, of which Spain is a member. I reiterate our full support for the Government of Iraq in its efforts to build a democratic country in which members of all religious faiths and ethnicities can coexist and where human rights and the principle of territorial integrity are respected. Moreover, we are not giving up on any other seemingly deadlocked situation, whether in Yemen, Libya or Afghanistan.

Spain supports United Nations efforts for a just, lasting and mutually acceptable political solution that would allow for the self-determination of the people of Western Sahara on terms compatible with the purposes and principles of the Charter of the United Nations. In April, the Security Council renewed the mandate of the United Nations Mission for the Referendum in Western Sahara for one year. In that regard, Spain welcomes the restoration of the Mission's capabilities, in line with Security Council resolution 2285 (2016). We encourage the parties to resume their dialogue with a view to finally resolving that dispute.

Spain has consolidated its relations with the African continent, whose strength and dynamism we commend and to which we are giving special and preferential treatment. We are following with concern

the developments in the conflicts in South Sudan, Mali, Somalia and the Central African Republic. Spanish military operations have been deployed in those three countries in the framework of European Union operations, as well as in the various United Nations missions throughout the world.

In mentioning them here, I wish to pay tribute to all the Blue Helmets who are working to achieve peace in those missions, sometimes at the cost of their lives. Here, it would be only right to acknowledge the work of the African Union and subregional organizations that also make an extraordinary contribution to maintaining peace on the continent — an achievement in which Spain will continue to play an active part.

On a map of the world where shadows abound, hope also exists. Spain welcomed the agreement on the Iranian nuclear programme and also commends Iran's verification of compliance with the conditions to end the sanctions regime and open the door to a new trade regime with fixed restrictions. Our country is engaging in rigorous coordination efforts to assess trade requests.

Few pieces of news would be more encouraging than the announcement of the resumption of peace talks between Israel and Palestine. Spain supports the holding of an international conference to help encourage the negotiating parties in the course of this year, which marks 25 years since the Madrid Conference. The two-State solution, with mutually agreed upon and secure borders, is the only way to achieve a fair and lasting peace. Denial and confrontation between communities must lead the way to peaceful coexistence. In that context, Spain will promote initiatives to encourage harmony among the civil societies of both parties.

Two and a half years ago, on our continent, Ukraine's sovereignty, independence and territorial integrity were violated. The European Union, Ukraine and Russia must be able to steer a course that will benefit us all in terms of European security and prosperity, on terms that respect the principles of international law and the values of democracy.

We follow with great concern the serious and repeated violations of the non-proliferation regime by the Democratic People's Republic of Korea. We call on them to focus their efforts on a genuine search for a climate of understanding and dialogue with the international community.

As for the European Union, the great project of coexistence is now at a major crossroads. As Jean Monnet indicated, the European project is not a given; it is something we have to create every day, on the basis of a community of both interests and people. The European Union is an act of resolve, of trust in the ability of our peoples to overcome past mistakes and not repeat them. Its sustainability and strengthening are key to peace and prosperity on our continent and are enormously positive factors, both as an example and because of the deployment of capabilitities that can benefit the United Nations as a whole. No one would gain if it were to become paralysed or fail.

We Spaniards are proud of belonging to the European Union, from which we have obtained undeniable benefits and to which we have made important contributions, including a number of sacrifices when these were necessary for the common good of Europe. In the current circumstances, we are ready to continue in the vanguard of the European Union's growth in all areas.

As Spain has always done from this rostrum, let me say that Gibraltar is the only remaining colony in Europe. In compliance with the United Nations mandate, I invite the United Kingdom to put an end that anachronism by an agreed solution between our two countries that restores the territorial integrity of Spain and benefits the population of the colony and the Gibraltar region.

This year is the last in the mandate of Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon. I would like to thank him on behalf of Spain for his outstanding service and to express my personal gratitude and appreciation. Spain welcomes the criteria of transparency and participation that are to guide us in selecting his successor. I trust that we will be able to make the best possible choice.

Spain is a candidate for the Human Rights Council for the 2018-2020 period. I ask for the General Assembly's support for its candidature. The promotion and defence of human rights are a hallmark of our foreign policy. We are particularly committed to promoting gender equality, the right to drinking water and sanitation, the rights of people with disabilities and the fight against racism, xenophobia and hate crimes.

The United Nations has in Spain a Member that is committed to the values embodied in this Organization. We know that they rely on us to deal with the main challenges of today. We do this in the spirit of Don

Quixote and the loyalty of Sancho Panza. As our universal classic tells us, "everyone is the architect of his own fortune". We Spaniards want to be the architects of a United Nations where fairness, happiness, the attainment of human rights and respect for human dignity will prevail at all times.

The Acting President (*spoke in Spanish*): On behalf of the General Assembly, I wish to thank the King of the Kingdom of Spain for the statement he has just made.

His Majesty Don Felipe VI, King of the Kingdom of Spain, was escorted from the General Assembly Hall.

Address by Mr. Edgar Chagwa Lungu, President of the Republic of Zambia

The Acting President (*spoke in Spanish*): The Assembly will now hear an address by the President of the Republic of Zambia.

Mr. Edgar Chagwa Lungu, President of the Republic of Zambia, was escorted into the General Assembly Hall.

The Acting President (*spoke in Spanish*): On behalf of the General Assembly, I have the honour to welcome to the United Nations His Excellency Mr. Edgar Chagwa Lungu, President of the Republic of Zambia, and to invite him to address the General Assembly.

President Lungu: It is indeed a great honour and privilege for me to address the General Assembly at its seventy-first session. May I join others in congratulating Mr. Thomson on his election to preside over the deliberations of this session. I am confident that, under his able leadership, the General Assembly will successfully address the pressing issues on its current agenda. I am also confident that he will steer the Organization in the right direction and that we will have fruitful discussions on the well-considered theme of this session, entitled "The Sustainable Development Goals: a universal push to transform our world".

Allow me to also convey my appreciation to Mr. Ban Ki-moon, who will be concluding his mandate as Secretary-General this year. Through his leadership, Mr. Ban Ki-moon has distinguished himself as a world leader committed to tackling key global challenges, such as reducing poverty and addressing climate change. He has been instrumental in ushering in the Sustainable Development Goals, the successor of the Millennium Development Goals. He has distinguished himself as a global leader, focused on fairness and justice for all nations. Therefore, as he winds up his onerous responsibility as Secretary-General, I would like to convey to him, on behalf of the Zambian people, our best wishes in his future endeavours. Well done. And we thank him once more for his great efforts to improve the lot of humankind.

We are meeting during a special period, when our countries are embarking upon the implementation of the current global development blueprint, the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. Africa appreciates the important synergies of the 2030 Agenda and our own Africa Union Agenda 2063 — the Africa We Want, which was adopted by the African Union Heads of State and Government at the African Union Summit in January 2015. This convergence is a clear demonstration that our continental aspirations and those of the broader international community are well aligned in terms of achieving a better world for all global citizens.

My Government accords the highest priority to the achievement of the Sustainable Development Goals, and we believe that there can be no meaningful development without the elimination of poverty. In that context, special attention should be focused on the least developed countries. They are more vulnerable and need more support to strengthen their economies in order to overcome the challenges they face.

In our quest to address the issues of poverty, unemployment, hunger and income inequality, Zambia has taken specific measures aimed at promoting economic transformation. Those measures include, but are not limited to, the development of value-chain clusters, the diversification of the agriculture sector, the promotion of forestry and the establishment of multi-facility economic zones and industrial parks. We are strongly resolved to promote industrialization through the agriculture and manufacturing sectors in order to speed up the diversification of the economy away from an over-dependency on mining.

In that regard, my Government is addressing the challenges faced by micro-, small and medium-sized enterprises, such as access to finance, markets and technology and the enhancement of entrepreneurial skills. These deliberate interventions are expected to spur enterprise growth and job creation. The renewed focus on economic diversification is expected to further transform our country from dependency on primary

products to the development of value-added products through industrialization.

In our quest to foster economic growth, my Government has developed its seventh five-year national development plan, which will take effect in January 2017. The plan focuses on enhancing productive capacities in the agriculture sector and promoting rural development, which will improve the livelihoods and well-being of rural communities.

Like most developing nations, Zambia is today faced with the challenges of population growth, and in particular the need to harness the demographic dividend. There is a mismatch between the growth in the youth population and their assimilation into the job market. That is why the Zambian Government is implementing necessary policies focused on skills development, entrepreneurship, education and infrastructure development. Zambia is ready to learn from, and share with, other countries best practices to address the challenges faced by our young people. It is therefore critical that youth remain actively engaged in the implementation of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development.

The development of appropriate infrastructure is cardinal in fulfilling Africa's desire to accelerate economic growth and in enhancing the continent's competitiveness on the global market. Africa must expand intra-African trade and bolster its productive capacities. In line with this, Zambia has embarked upon infrastructure development, including the construction and rehabilitation of roads, railways, bridges and airports.

As the current Chair of the Group of Landlocked Developing Countries, I wish to reiterate our call for the international community to remain committed to the guidelines of the Vienna Programme of Action for Landlocked Developing Countries for the Decade 2014-2024, which aims to improve the living conditions of the half a billion people who live in the 32 landlocked developing countries.

It is evident that climate change has had an adverse impact on the growth of our economies. Zambia has been negatively affected by climate change, which has led to poor crop yields as a result of adverse weather patterns. We have suffered energy deficits as a result of low water levels in our hydropower dams, which account for more than 98 per cent of our power production. We are therefore pursuing a greater energy mix through investment in alternative sources of energy, such as solar, wind and geothermal, among others.

I also wish to join other countries that are calling for the provision of adequate resources to make fully operational the Green Climate Fund, as that would greatly contribute to climate-change mitigation and adaptation. Zambia applauds the landmark Paris Agreement on Climate Change. It calls for fulfilment of the pledges made by parties at the Conference of the Parties to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change .

Zambia also recognizes the importance of food security, and it therefore reaffirms its commitment to prioritizing a range of agricultural practices, including appropriate technologies that respond to climate change, such as conservation agriculture for sustainable and increased food production. Zambia supports calls for improved access to global and local agro-food markets, including transparent and open trading systems, as long as they do not negatively impact on local production. We therefore invite more investments in agro-processing industries to add value to our products and increase employment opportunities.

Zambia is making major strides in addressing various challenges in the health sector. We want to ensure easy access to health services by all our citizens. We are making steady progress in addressing communicable diseases such as HIV and AIDS, tuberculosis and malaria. We are decentralizing primary health-care services and improving the financing mechanisms for major communicable diseases to strengthen the health systems.

At the regional level, the strengthening of the Southern African Development Community Strategy on Pooled Procurement of Essential Medicines and Health Commodities is among the positive interventions that are contributing to our improved health systems. Current interventions in relation to HIV and AIDS include the prevention of mother-to-child transmission and the treatment of all children who are HIV-positive. Our overall goal is to reach a zero-infection rate, in line with the global HIV and AIDS aspirations.

The Zambian Government has put in place policy measures to ensure that our people have access to sexual and reproductive health-care services, including family planning. In addition, my Government has increased the number of health centres, in both rural and urban areas, where these services are accessed.

Zambia has made efforts to strengthen the legal framework for gender equity and equality by enacting the Gender Equity and Equality Act of 2015. That progressive law has put into effect domestically the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women, the Protocol to the African Charter on Human and Peoples' Rights on the Rights of Women in Africa, and the Southern African Development Community Protocol on Gender and Development. At the continental level, in 2016 Zambia was among 11 countries presented with a gender award for the promotion of gender economic rights. In 2015, I was also humbled to receive the title of promoter of the He for She campaign from UN-Women in recognition of the role that Zambia has played in the area of women's empowerment.

This exemplifies the special attention and efforts that Zambia has continued to devote to issues related to the empowerment of women and young people in order to promote inclusive and sustainable growth. The measures that my Government has taken include promoting women's participation in commerce, trade and industry. In order to address some of the challenges that women face, we need support for the creation of lines of credit for women's empowerment programmes, skills development, employment creation, poverty reduction, and technical assistance in fostering environmentally friendly agricultural methods.

Africa needs strong institutions, not necessarily strong men. In that regard, Zambia is endeavouring to build a peaceful, just and inclusive society, particularly by consolidating democracy. The importance of democracy in our societies cannot be overemphasized. It is an extremely important aspect of our political systems that empowers people to freely participate in governance. As the Assembly is aware, Zambia held elections on 11 August, and they did indeed represent another opportunity for Zambia to demonstrate its commitment to upholding and promoting the tenets of democracy. I would therefore like to take this opportunity to thank the international community for supporting us during the process. Equally, I would like to thank the Zambian people for their peaceful conduct during the elections. I want to assure the Assembly that my Government will use its mandate to continue protecting our peaceful democratic legacy and meeting the aspirations of our people.

My Government yearns for a community of nations that recognizes and respects the sovereign equality of all nations, in accordance with the Charter of the United Nations. As States Members of the United Nations, we all have positive roles to play in promoting peace and security in order to attain sustainable development for present and future generations. However, Zambia is concerned about the fact that the world today continues to witness unbridled acts of conflict and terrorism and rising levels of poverty, which remain overarching and pressing challenges to our aspirations. We must therefore eradicate conflict if we are to attain the Sustainable Development Goals.

Zambia, as a member of the African Union Peace and Security Council, will dedicate its three-year term on that important decision-making body to promoting peace and security on the African continent. I therefore reiterate Zmbia's continued commitment to the ongoing efforts for peace and conflict resolution of the Southern African Development Community, the International Conference on the Great Lakes Region and the African Union. We believe that the solution to African problems lies in Africa finding its own solutions. We nonetheless welcome and express our gratitude to the international community for its continued support to conflict resolution and peace processes on the continent.

While Zambia believes that the United Nations should be at the core of global governance and efforts to meet the challenges of collective peace, security and development, there is a pressing need to reform the Organization so that it can reflect the contemporary realities of today's global order. Zambia therefore fully supports the Ezulwini Consensus and the Sirte Declaration, representing the African common position on reform of the Security Council. It is not right that Africa remains the only continent without permanent representation on the Security Council. That historical injustice must be corrected. We therefore urge Member States, including those that have vested interests in maintaining the status quo, to give due consideration to this legitimate demand from Africa. We all have an obligation to make the Security Council more representative, democratic and accountable if the Organization is going to demand democracy, representation and accountability from its Member States.

Zambia's belief in the ideals and role of the Security Council remains unshaken, and it is in that regard that I reiterate our steadfast commitment to continuing to contribute to the operations and well-being of the United Nations.

The Acting President (*spoke in Spanish*): On behalf of the General Assembly, I wish to thank the President of the Republic of Zambia for the statement he has just made.

Mr. Edgar Chagwa Lungu, President of the Republic of Zambia, was escorted from the General Assembly Hall.

Address by Mr. Juan Carlos Varela Rodríguez, President of the Republic of Panama

The Acting President (*spoke in Spanish*): The Assembly will now hear an address by the President of the Republic of Panama.

Mr. Juan Carlos Varela Rodríguez, President of the Republic of Panama, was escorted into the General Assembly Hall.

The Acting President (*spoke in Spanish*): On behalf of the General Assembly, I have the honour to welcome to the United Nations His Excellency Mr. Juan Carlos Varela Rodríguez, President of the Republic of Panama, and to invite him to address the Assembly.

President Varela Rodríguez (*spoke in Spanish*): On behalf of the people of Panama, to whom I send a warm embrace from this rostrum, I am pleased to participate in the general debate of the General Assembly in order to share my thoughts on the progress and challenges that lie ahead for my country, the region and the world as they work to ensure peace, welfare and prosperity for our peoples.

I would like to begin by recognizing the Secretary-General for his outstanding work at the United Nations over the past 10 years, in which we have achieved historic agreements aimed at benefiting both present and future generations of humankind.

Panama is a country of dialogue and discussion, a multi-ethnic, multicultural, peace-loving nation, where people from all over the world who have found a new home on our land live and cooperate peacefully. Our motto — "Panama, bridge of the world, heart of the universe" — is growing ever stronger, and we are making progress under a Government committed to the democratic system, called to fulfil the role that stems from our geographical position.

Today I am pleased to inform the Assembly that on 26 June, we succeeded in completing the expansion of the Panama Canal, through which more than 120 New Panamax ships, capable of carrying cargoes three times larger than previously, have already travelled. The expansion, which was done mainly with Panamanian labour, has filled our nation with rightful pride and joy. With that major step, we Panamanians have fulfilled our commitment to continuing to bring the world closer together, facilitate global trade and put our country at the service of the international community. With the expansion finished, we are now preparing to move forward with studies that will enable us to increase the water-retention capacity of the Canal watershed in order to ensure a sufficient supply of drinking water to our major cities and uninterrupted operation of the inter-oceanic route. I would like to take this opportunity to invite the international community to visit our country and appreciate this masterpiece of engineering.

In Panama, we are working for political reform that gives democracy stability by making sure that it is always based on service to others. Thanks to the contributions of the expanded Canal, and of an honest Government committed to transparency and the efficient management of public funds, Panama is maintaining its economic growth and making rapid progress towards meeting the 17 Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs).

Our Government's 2014-2019 strategic plan is aligned with the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and backed by an aggressive public investment plan, totalling $19 billion, designed to provide all Panamanians with access to potable water, basic sanitation, decent housing and efficient, high-quality health, education, security and transport services. With the aim of eradicating poverty and inequality, we have strengthened and expanded the coverage of our social support system programmes, which now reach 20 per cent of the population. In the area of public health, we have completed the first phase of our national dialogue for effective coordination of the health system. We have conducted mass vaccinations following an outbreak of the H1N1 virus in the region, and through our first national census on preventive health we have done free clinical evaluations of more than 80,000 people over the age of 40.

As a country, we are making the biggest investment in basic sanitation and mass transit in Latin America, areas that account for about 60 per cent of our budget for 2019. Together with our social housing and training programmes for young people at risk, those projects are transforming our neighbourhoods and communities with a new model for human development, with a

vision by the State taking into account social criteria and without partisan political distinctions. In the area of education, in a strategic alliance with the private sector, we are allocating the funds needed to develop an educational model with 100 per cent high school attendance, an extended school day and bilingual education, alongside the construction of new, modern higher technical education institutes that can enable our young people to get the well-paid jobs that our growing service economy is generating.

With the support of more than $3 billion in foreign investment in the energy sector, we are diversifying our energy mix with renewable, cleaner types of energy. We have set ourselves the goal of recovering 50 per cent of our deforested areas in the next 20 years and protecting our biodiversity and our oceans. By 2019, we will have built more than 300,000 basic sanitation units in Panamanian homes and housing projects for more than 100,000 families nationwide. We are building 10,000 new classrooms and renovating more than 3,000 public schools across the country. Right now we are making progress in adding another 50 kilometres to our mass transit metro system, which will benefit more than 1.5 million people. Our plan also includes long-term planning for the construction of new hospitals, roads, water treatment plants, aqueducts and sewage and wastewater treatment plants. All these efforts in public investments are being implemented with full fiscal responsibility, an added value of an honest and transparent Government.

In addition, we have developed a set of major reforms and exemplary actions aimed at strengthening our democracy and ensuring transparency and accountability within a framework of respect for the separation of powers and the rule of law. With every passing day, our country comes closer to meeting the SDGs. The range of world-class international services that form the basis of our growing economy makes us ever more committed to being responsible citizens of the world. As a serious, responsible country, Panama is willing to comply with the obligations of international law and to cooperate as a regional partner and strategic ally on trade and security issues.

With the same determination with which we committed to completing the expansion of the Canal and protecting our logistical services, ports and airports from organized crime, we in Panama have accepted responsibility for upholding our financial system and moving forward with the exchange of tax information. Our Administration has enacted important legal and institutional reforms so that we can adopt top international standards in order to comply with the recommendations of the Financial Action Task Force on preventing and combating money laundering, terrorist financing and related activities. As I told the Assembly last year (see A/70/PV.19), some weeks ago we reaffirmed our commitment to transparent financial systems and fiscal responsibility with our announcement that Panama will become party to the Convention on Mutual Administrative Assistance in Tax Matters of the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development, and we are going to do that. We will continue to work with the international community to lead efforts to prevent financial systems from being used for purposes that do not represent the common good.

In addressing the serious threats and major challenges that are the purview of the Assembly, we must not forget that relations among States are global. Therefore we cannot allow differences of opinion among two or more countries on a single topic to jeopardize the progress that can be achieved on other bilateral and multilateral issues of common interest and mutual benefit to our peoples.

The world witnessed significant progress made at the Paris summit. This week, Panama will deposit the instrument of ratification of the Paris Agreement on climate change. Our country is moving aggressively to play its part. With the same resolve and commitment, I call on States Members of the Organization to join forces against climate change, pool their efforts and do everything in their power to find comprehensive solutions to the issue of irregular migration flows, and to continue taking solid steps that will allow us to defeat terrorism and organized crime, inequality and poverty.

In recent years, we have witnessed the intensification of terrorist attacks that threaten the peace and security of humankind on a recurring basis. I wish to recognize the men and women fighting terrorism and to express our solidarity with the families of those killed in these attacks. I thank those who are deployed on humanitarian missions around the world, assisting those who flee violence caused by terrorism and armed conflict.

Panama energetically condemns the recent attack perpetrated against a humanitarian aid convoy in Syria. I take this opportunity to call on the great Powers to maintain their diplomatic channels open and pursue

dialogue within the framework of the Security Council in order to achieve peace in Syria and the cessation of other armed conflicts in the world.

Yesterday, we Heads of State had the opportunity to discuss in depth the issue of irregular migration flows in our region, which in our case principally involves Haitian citizens who risk and even lose their lives crossing vast distances, rivers and inaccessible territories en route to northern countries in the hope of a better future. We stress our position that all migration policies and measures must be based on the protection of the inherent human right to life. Convinced that controlled migration contributes to justice and equity in the world, Panama therefore reaffirms its commitment to providing humanitarian treatment for migrants, applying strict health and safety controls. I call on all countries of the hemisphere to endorse the successful completion of the electoral process in Haiti and the strengthening of its democratic institutions and economy.

The rapprochement between the Governments of Cuba and the United States is an example of what diplomacy can achieve in order to contribute to the regulation of migration flows, and we expect this new dimension of the foreign policies of both countries to continue developing until the normalization of full diplomatic relations is achieved.

Panama supports the dialogue that is taking place in Venezuela. We believe that the inclusion of the Holy See as a mediator of the process would be very positive, and we reiterate our position that any end to tensions between the political forces of that brotherly nation must be achieved through democratic means and dialogue in order for social peace and respect for human rights to prevail.

On 26 September, we shall accompany the Government of Colombia in the signing of the Final Peace Agreement in that brotherly nation, which we commend and fully support. Our presence at that historic event will not be only to support the Agreement, but also to honour the memory of thousands of members of the Colombian public forces who have died and the thousands of innocent lives lost throughout the conflict.

We congratulate the Government of Colombia and President Juan Manuel Santos Calderón for his determination in the pursuit of peace, and we call on the demobilizing rebel groups to fulfil their obligations, as laid out in the Agreement, in order to consolidate a peace that is so desired and deserved by the Colombian nation. In this context, I acknowledge the Secretariat for its decision to become actively involved in supporting the peace process through to its successful completion.

Despite this great step forward, the region is threatened by increased drug production and trafficking. Panama will therefore continue to strengthen its capabilities and professionalize its public forces in order to protect our homeland and support the countries of our continent in the front-line fight against drug trafficking. During the 27 months of our Government, we have achieved a significant reduction in crime of more than 40 per cent after having launched a successful security plan to prevent and combat crime in Panama, offering more opportunities for young people at risk and a firm hand against delinquency and organized crime. In accordance with our security strategy, we have managed to seize tons of drugs and dismantle networks linked to organized crime.

In the first years of our Government, we reached out to the countries of Asia. With the support of Singapore, we are developing higher technical education in our country, and through the technical assistance and financing of the Government of Japan, Panama will build a 27-kilometer monorail that will benefit hundreds of thousands of Panamanians in the west of our capital city. With Europe, we increased our air connectivity with direct flights to five cities on that continent. With the United States, we have strengthened cooperation in security, and with the countries of our Latin American region we have adopted migration and trade policies that contribute to the development of economic relations and encourage integration.

Two months ago, the Holy See and His Holiness Pope Francis acknowledged our country's commitment to playing an active role in strengthening unity and peace in the world and guiding young people so that they may continue advancing along the path of education, work and progress. Panama has been chosen to host the next World Youth Day in 2019. This event will bring together more than 500,000 young people from 190 countries and will be a great opportunity to sow the seed of peace among young people in Central America, exchanging violence, mourning and pain for peace, faith and hope. This will promote and consolidate family values, security and the common good.

In the globalized world in which we live, threatened by armed conflict, terrorism, organized crime and

humanitarian crises, responsible countries represented in the Assembly must unite to confront these global threats and strengthen the United Nations system. Our canal has expanded, as have our ports and airports. In this way, Panama is each day more prepared to be the great connection. Yet what is most important for me as President is that the Government I lead should prepare us in such a way that this connection is more than merely logistical, and encompasses values and principles that strengthen governability in all nations and guarantee social peace in the world. My Government is committed to its country and to its people, and my nation is committed to placing its riches, capabilities and geographical position at the service of all the world's inhabitants. This is Panama — the route that unites the world.

The Acting President (*spoke in Spanish*): On behalf of the General Assembly, I wish to thank the President of the Republic of Panama for the statement he has just made.

Mr. Juan Carlos Varela Rodríguez, President of the Republic of Panama, was escorted from the General Assembly Hall.

Address by Mr. Luis Guillermo Solís Rivera, President of the Republic of Costa Rica

The Acting President (*spoke in Spanish*): The Assembly will now hear an address by the President of the Republic of Costa Rica.

Mr. Luis Guillermo Solís Rivera, President of the Republic of Costa Rica, was escorted into the General Assembly Hall.

The Acting President (*spoke in Spanish*): On behalf of the General Assembly, I have the honour to welcome to the United Nations His Excellency Mr. Luis Guillermo Solís Rivera, President of the Republic of Costa Rica, and to invite him to address the Assembly.

President Solís Rivera (*spoke in Spanish*): Costa Rica congratulates Mr. Thomson on his election as leader of the General Assembly and welcomes the priorities that he has set for his term of office. The President can count on our full support for their implementation. Costa Rica also thanks the Secretary-General for his leadership and, in particular, his contribution to the cause of peace and sustainable development.

We are coming to the end of 2016, having achieved little progress in addressing the crisis of refugees and migrants — the worst such crisis since the Second World War. Costa Rica reiterates the urgency of providing assistance and the need to ensure the protection of and respect for the human rights of people who have been forced to leave their homes in search of safe havens for themselves and their families, as a result of armed conflict, violence, natural disasters or the effects of climate change that threaten their access to the most basic means of survival. We are failing to fulfil our commitment to leave no one behind.

Mass media and the international community have paid little attention to the tragedy of thousands of migrants travelling through Latin America from south to north. For Costa Rica, from April to September alone 9,487 irregular migrants have crossed our borders, and we have granted refugee status to a total of 215 people during the first half of 2016 alone. Our country has been a crossroads for thousands of migrants: Cubans, Haitians, Central Americans, Asians and Africans.

Clearly, the problem is global and requires joint solutions, solidarity, shared responsibility and comprehensive approaches. With regard to migration and refugee crises, we must not consider only large movements, as these only deal with very specific experiences, and leave out any discussion on the constant flow of migration throughout the rest of the world. Such movement takes place outside of the confines of the law. It is a phenomenon that is fuelled by inequality, poverty and structural causes resulting from conflict and is fostered by the activities of international organized crime networks.

As a country of origin, transit and destination for migrants, Costa Rica has criminalized their trafficking under the law against trafficking in persons and smuggling of migrants adopted in 2012. That legal framework also guides the design and implementation of our national policy to address the crime of migrant smuggling from a gender perspective. The policy is based on the care and protection of victims, prevention, law enforcement, information gathering, analysis and research, and institutional coordination.

In our experience, faced with flows of migrants and the need for humanitarian aid, we must highlight the ongoing role played by civil society organizations as a support network for migrants and their families on the move, in addition to their enormous capacity to document the situation on the ground and see to and deal with violations of human rights of smuggled migrants.

Communities that have welcomed these migrants have shown their profound solidarity with those in need.

The complex situation concerning the wave of migrants will only be exacerbated by the effects of climate change. Floods, droughts and the rise in sea level will force people to pick up and move within their country and abroad.

Such challenges call on us to virtuously manage the entire ecosystem of human mobility through a dialogue on processes, actors, mechanisms and organizations. Resources must be efficiently used, and there must be better coordination between humanitarian and development actors. That does not mean that development resources must be redirected to humanitarian assistance. That would create a vicious circle, thereby neglecting investment in the root causes of such movements.

We will not tire of repeating and insisting on the need to address the specific impacts that migration has on women and the need to adapt public policies to address those particularities. We will continue to raise our voice to call for action to combat gender-based and sexual violence.

If we are feigning loyalty to laws and institutions, we had better stop. If we believe that humankind can survive by remaining on this path and adhering to pretences as usual, we will only be selfishly and short-sightedly digging our own grave. We should remember that it is not because of mere altruism but the starkest realities that we have chosen to abide by a global order, subject to institutions and universal principles of self-regulation. The escalation of tensions, conflicts and the use of force suit no one but a few merchants of suffering and death. The national interest of all States is to strengthen the international system and the United Nations, which is at the centre of that effort.

The philosopher and Nobel Peace Prize laureate Albert Schweitzer said,

> "To the question whether I am a pessimist or an optimist, I answer that my knowledge is pessimistic, but my willing and hoping are optimistic".

Today there are realities and actions that fill me with optimism because change is taking place in the world. I wish to thank Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon for his invitation to be co-facilitator, along with my colleague Simona Scarpaleggia, Chief Executive Officer of IKEA Switzerland, of the High-Level Panel on Women's Economic Empowerment. The hard work of the Panel has already resulted constructively in a preliminary report. I want to share several of its conclusions with the Assembly.

Simona Scarpaleggia said at the Panel,

> "I firmly believe that there is huge potential that could be unlocked simply by valuing and empowering women. The energy, the power and creativity of women are badly needed — not only to make this world a better place, but to enable it to survive in the years to come."

The lessons are many, but first it is necessary to recall some facts, some of which might seem obvious and others that might surprise. The vast majority of women in the world work. They work in the informal, public and private sectors as business women, domestic workers, and unremunerated workers. But women have half as many possibilities as men in securing full-time paid work. It is estimated that there are 1.27 billion women worldwide in paid jobs compared with 2 billion men. We are talking about a difference of more than 700 million women who do not have the same opportunities as men. Women undertake unpaid work three times as often as men and handle most of the caregiving work. The deep and unfortunate impact of this situation is reflected in the fact that it is estimated that the value of unpaid care work is equivalent to $10 billion, or 13 per cent of world gross domestic product.

The Sustainable Development Goals are interconnected and interdependent. The Panel emphasized the multiple relationships that exist between the targets set out in Goal 5, on gender equality and the empowerment of women, and Goal 8, to promote inclusive and sustainable economic growth, employment and decent work for all, men and women alike. The relationship between this debate and Goal 10 is clear: the goal is to reduce inequality within and among countries. I am convinced that the economic empowerment of women should be viewed not only as a goal in itself but as a means for the implementation of the other targets and Goals set out in the 2030 Agenda.

The Panel proposes seven principles and seven guiding actions. As basic principles, we assume that no woman should be left behind and that nothing should be done for women without the participation of women, and that we should focus equally on rights and profits. Empowerment is not only the right thing to do; it is the intelligent road map towards human development,

growth and business promotion. We must also address the root causes of economic gender inequality based on gender inequalities in society, respect internationally agreed standards, and, finally, recognize the need to work in partnerships, with global compliance in all countries.

To achieve the global empowerment of women, the Panel recommends the following measures.

First, we must end stereotypes and transform and challenge the rules that limit women's access to work or devalue their work. Changing those rules must be a priority in order to expand women's economic opportunities within the framework of the 2030 Agenda.

We must level the playing field for women, guarantee employment and social protection, and reform discriminatory laws and regulations. A total of 155 countries worldwide have at least one law that prevents women from becoming involved in economic activities. This must be changed; it would contribute greatly to economic growth, and it is a simple step that all Governments can take.

Finally, as a social co-responsibility, we must invest in care, recognizing, reducing and redistributing unpaid work in this field. We must ensure decent working conditions for domestic workers. One of the first steps to achieve this is to ratify International Labour Organization (ILO) Convention No. 189. I urge those countries that have not yet done so to take that step.

We must guarantee the an adequate distribution of digital, financial and physical goods. This is also important. We need Governments, the private sector and civil society to take action so as to ensure that trends and innovations in digital technologies and finance, as well as legal reforms in the field of tenancy and land ownership, expand women's opportunities.

We must change our culture and the way we do business in order to create opportunities for women. As a minimum, businesses should follow ILO conventions along with national legislation regarding gender equality in order to eliminate discriminatory practices.

We must create opportunities, with Governments improving practices in the public sector both as an employer and as a supplier of goods and services. We must establish, implement and promote public policies that benefit women living in poverty and vulnerability as well as macroeconomic policies that guarantee their rights and generate sustainable and inclusive work.

Women's voices must be heard, encouraging a greater participation in leadership and business and political decision-making posts. In order to translate such measures into reality, it is imperative that we improve data collection relating to the economic empowerment of women. The ILO, along with many other United Nations agencies, development banks and various countries and organizations, has been making considerable efforts to create new methodologies and measurements with respect to the widest variety of variables pertaining to the economic empowerment of women.

The Heads of State and Government who are listening today should know that the most important aspect of the work of the Panel, which is scheduled to issue a second report next year, relates to everything that we are able to accomplish in our own countries as a result of its findings, good practices, principles and recommendations. We invite those States capable of implementing the Panel's recommendations to do so and to become laboratories instrumental in their implementation. A call to action is imperative. There must be greater commitment on the part of all to achieve this objective.

We know that the world has many crises to deal with, but we can and must promote and ensure changes that will transform the lives of millions of women and girls. This is an imperative call to action. I am certain that this will benefit not only women, but also our societies at large. This is a step we must take in order to achieve equality in other aspects of relationships between men and women. This is the best path for our planet; together, humankind can effectively adopt new models of sustainable development that allow us to survive as a species.

It fills us with immense pride that the Paris Agreement negotiations were led by a Costa Rican woman, Christiana Figueres, Executive Secretary of the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change until early July, a woman with immense diplomatic capabilities who showed us that when we work together, with commitment and a focus on the common good, we can restore hope and work towards a better world.

The Paris Agreement must enter into force immediately, and we have an obligation to increase our ambitions with time. That is why Costa Rica has made every effort to complete its domestic approval

process and will soon join the list of countries that have ratified it.

We therefore aspire to become a laboratory for the deep decarbonization of the world economy and a green hub for management, innovation and the transfer of knowledge, with early action built upon existing achievements. With our planned nationally determined contribution, we will work to achieve our national aspiration to steer the economy towards carbon neutrality by 2021, as part and parcel of pre-2020 voluntary actions, and we have strengthened our long-term commitment to the deep decarbonization of the economy. The compensatory effects of our forests are accompanied by emissions reductions in critical sectors such as transport, livestock and waste. We have set an absolute emissions limit for 2030, which is equivalent to a 25 per cent reduction in emissions compared with 2012.

Our aspirations also include the promotion of our social inclusion and development policies so that our focus can go beyond the traditional silo-based approach. We are moving towards an integral development model based on multidimensional benchmarks that go far beyond the entry requirement. For that reason, on 9 September the heads of the three State branches and representatives of local governments, the private sector, social and religious organizations and academia gathered to sign the national pact to meet the Sustainable Development Goals.

Our planet needs our care, and this care must be all-encompassing. Costa Rica is fully committed to processes that, within the framework of the United Nations, seek to protect oceans and marine resources, in particular through the elaboration of a new international agreement for the protection of the more than 60 per cent of marine biodiversity that is located in international areas, in keeping with Goal 14 of the 2030 Agenda.

Costa Rica continues to be deeply shocked by the terrorist attacks that, unfortunately, as we know, occur somewhere in the world practically every week of the year. We would like once again to express our absolute, unequivocal condemnation of terrorism in every all its forms and manifestations, no matter who commits it or where it happens or with whatever goal in mind, as well as to stress the need to bring to justice those who commit such acts.

The fight against terrorism must be framed in strict observance of international law, including human rights law, international humanitarian law and the international law on refugees. In that context, we think that this is the right time to make a respectful request to countries that have not yet done so to ratify the Arms Trade Treaty without further delay. The diversion of arms to extremist groups could be substantially reduced if more States were to implement the provisions set forth in that multilateral, legally binding instrument.

Costa Rica has followed with concern the constant launches of missiles and the carrying out of nuclear exercises by the Democratic People's Republic of Korea, the most recent one being on 9 September. In addition to voicing our strongest condemnation and rejection of such actions, which represent a serious threat to peace, stability and regional and international security, we must demand that North Korea cease such punishable acts, which unequivocally violate relevant resolutions of the Security Council, including the most recent one on the subject, resolution 2270 (2016).

Costa Rica also wishes to stress the importance of fighting impunity for criminal atrocities. Prosecution for such crimes must be promoted comprehensively and at the highest level. Costa Rica welcomes the initiatives aimed at promoting a code of conduct restricting the use of the veto in the Security Council in cases of outrageous crimes. Costa Rica reiterates its call to Member States to adopt the code of conduct put forth by the Accountability, Coherence and Transparency Group.

Likewise, Costa Rica welcomes the efforts oriented towards the full establishment of diplomatic relations between the United States of America and Cuba, as well as the measures announced by the senior authorities of those two friendly countries concerning political dialogue and openness. In that spirit, we reiterate our support for the lifting of the economic, commercial and financial blockade against Cuba in accordance with the systematic, almost unanimous, demands of the international community to that end.

Costa Rica welcomes the signing of the peace agreements in Colombia and the ceasefire declaration of last August. Not only does that bring an end to the oldest armed conflict in the region, but it also contributes to wholly converting Latin America and the Caribbean into a region of peace. We trust that the agreement will allow the Government and our Colombian brothers

and sisters to plan their future development along a peaceful path.

We would like to stress that it is the General Assembly that has the power to define the term of office of the next Secretary-General through the appointment resolution. We will continue to advocate that the term be a single period of seven years without the possibility of re-election, as we are convinced that that would facilitate the exercise of leadership free from the coordination required to set in motion a selection process designed to secure a second term. It is fundamental to Costa Rica that there be a democratization of the selection process for the Secretary-General. Therefore, the Security Council's endorsement of more than one candidate increases the inclusiveness, transparency and, most important, the legitimacy of the process by requiring a vote.

We have advocated, and will continue to advocate, that a woman should occupy the position of Secretary-General for the first time in history. We have reached a new milestone in history by having six extraordinary women, including a Costa Rican, as candidates for the position of Secretary-General. The transformation demanded by people all over the world requires new sensibilities and forms of exercising leadership.

My goal is that my daughter Inés, who is 10 years old now, will be able to tell her descendants of a strange former era, when women did not earn as much as men for the same work, when they were not equal owners of the means of production, when the care of children was a chore largely reserved for women and when their sexual and reproductive rights were not safeguarded. That strange era is the one that we must leave behind, in the same way that we slowly leave behind other scourges such as slavery, discrimination in any of its many forms, and consumption and wars as the basis for our economy, which are destroying our shared home, Mother Earth.

We can overcome hate, violence and inequality. We can achieve peace. We can trace the path to development and human progress. We just need to believe that it is possible, and that making it happen is in our hands.

The Acting President (*spoke in Spanish*): On behalf of the General Assembly, I wish to thank the President of the Republic of Costa Rica for the statement he has just made.

Mr. Luis Guillermo Solís Rivera, President of the Republic of Costa Rica, was escorted from the General Assembly Hall.

Address by His Excellency Mr. Tsakhia Elbegdorj, President of Mongolia

The Acting President (*spoke in Spanish*): The Assembly will now hear an address by the President of Mongolia.

Mr. Tsakhia Elbegdorj, President of Mongolia, was escorted into the General Assembly Hall.

The Acting President (*spoke in Spanish*): On behalf of the General Assembly, I have the honour to welcome to the United Nations His Excellency Mr. Tsakhia Elbegdorj, President of Mongolia, and to invite him to address the Assembly.

President Elbegdorj: At the outset, I wish to join others in extending our heartfelt congratulations to the President on his election as President of the General Assembly at its seventy-first session. Mongolia pledges its full support to the President.

It is my great honour to address this body for the seventh time on behalf of the Mongolian people. I am the youngest of eight sons. For generations, my family lived as nomadic herdsmen in the western highlands of my country. My mother and father never dreamed that, one day, their youngest son would be speaking from this respected rostrum to the largest assembly in the world.

I am proud to serve for my country in accordance with the free will of our people. Mongolia is governed by democratic rules. The President has a constitutional term limit. Therefore, my mandate ends next year. This is my last address as the President of Mongolia to the General Assembly.

But the people of Mongolia will continue to be citizens of the global community together with all nations. I am proud that my country is a good friend and partner of every State Member of the United Nations. I am confident that our next President will be welcomed by everyone here and will be given the same respect and the same spirit of cooperation that I have enjoyed during these years.

Achieving sustainable development is essential. It is essential because no one in the world should be left behind and be deprived of the right to development. We must work together towards a world where everybody

can have a dignified life, free from poverty, violence and depression. I firmly believe that justice, stability and security cannot be ensured without the rule of law and respect for the fundamental rights and freedoms of all. Those basic principles must be respected and protected in every country and by all Governments.

The United Nations celebrated its seventieth anniversary at a time of turbulence. Today, we are witnessing many conflicts and terrorist attacks, which have become almost daily news headlines. The world is facing its largest-ever humanitarian crisis, involving millions of people who have been displaced from their homes. The slowdown in global growth and the rising tensions in many places have threatened further progress.

However, the intervening year has been a period of inspiring collaboration as well. In some places, long-fought wars have come to an end. Peace agreements have been reached. The development of dangerous weapons has been restrained. The power of diplomacy has prevailed. Last year, all together, we launched the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, which includes a plan of action for people, the planet and prosperity. In December in Paris, the world turned a new page in its efforts to combat climate change.

As a global community, we are all following a new road map on our next 15-year journey. The 2030 Agenda and the Paris Agreement provide clear guidelines for achieving what we have promised to do. We must now act together as we take responsibility for our people. We must now strengthen our partnership so as to save the planet. We now need the resources to put the action plan to work.

Mongolia will ensure that no one is left behind by reaching out first to the most vulnerable. The principles and policies of the 2030 Agenda have been translated into our national strategy. The Mongolia 2030 Sustainable Development Vision of is under way. Our agenda calls for the establishment of a diverse and inclusive economic structure aimed at increasing decent jobs, providing opportunities and generating income. Our goal is to improve the quality of life and ensure environmental sustainability. Equally essential is cooperation between and among Governments, international development communities, the private sector and civil-society institutions.

From our past experience in implementing the Millennium Development Goals at the national level, we learned that regular follow-up and review mechanisms will be essential to achieving the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). Therefore, accountability and the quality of governance will eventually define the success of the SDGs.

Tomorrow, we will mark that landmark achievement on our collective journey to counter climate change. Let me take this opportunity to congratulate the States parties that have formally ratified the Paris Agreement. The people of Mongolia have joined the world in its fight to mitigate climate change. We have concluded our national legislative process and recently ratified the Paris Agreement. The Paris Agreement represents our common success, the result of our hard work. It is also a great inspiration for all of us. It is our bold vision and promise to our children to save the world for them. And we must deliver on that promise.

Mongolia is one of smallest carbon emitters in the world, yet it suffers disproportionately from climate change. Desertification, deforestation and the loss of biodiversity have severely affected livelihoods in our traditional nomadic culture, and they spur further environmental degradation.

Mongolia is holding up its end of the bargain. But the promised international cooperation and support are still lacking. The benefits of the green funds and carbon credits are sorely missed in Mongolia and many developed countries alike. We urge multilateral institutions to take the lead in those important efforts. We have one home, one world for all of us and one universal goal, namely, to save our home. Today is our time to act. We must not miss that chance, as we must not miss our future.

To that end we must work for equality, inclusiveness and accountability in our Governments and societies. Our agreed Agenda calls for inclusive societies and accountable institutions. People have called for good governance and the rule of law through the 2030 Agenda. They have asked for transparency and accountability in Governments' plans and development efforts. We must be accountable in our actions and responsibilities. Accountability is a benchmark requirement for good governance. Good governance is key to global peace and prosperity. We therefore promote accountability and good governance in our society. A national law on public hearings and a policy on supporting public participation are being implemented in Mongolia.

The Agenda for Sustainable Development demands action against corruption. It requires that institutions function in a transparent and efficient way, based on the rule of law. Basic services must therefore be delivered without discrimination or corruption. Investors can count on stability and businesses on predictability, with clear legal frameworks, decent jobs and recourse to independent courts. It means that natural resources are harnessed to benefit the many, not the few, and the environmental impact is measured and controlled.

Development and accountability are about democracy. We should never take democracy for granted. Neither should we worship it. It must be nurtured and strengthened on a daily basis. It is our way of living and our state of mind. A democratic society is sustainable because its aim is the highest development of every one of its members.

Therefore, our common goal as leaders should be to provide an environment where democratic institutions can thrive — the rule of law, human rights, democratic governance and free and fair elections. And we must enforce accountability. The people will do the rest in a democracy. For only in a democracy will each and every person be provided with opportunities for self-development and self-realization.

Over the past 26 years, Mongolia has accumulated experience as a stable and peaceful democracy. It was tested again in the most recent parliamentary elections, held on 29 June. The elections were open and transparent. The newly formed Parliament and Cabinet are now responsible for the people of Mongolia. The people vested them with full power to work hard for them.

Over the past two decades, Mongolia has been supporting and promoting stronger democratic institutions and sustainable, effective and legitimate democracy. We have been sharing our experiences and lessons learned with our fellow nations. We have been happy to learn that our lessons have helped other countries.

From this podium, I wish to sincerely congratulate the people of both Kyrgyzstan and Myanmar for their successful elections held last year and to wish them sustained prosperity.

As one of the Chairs of the International Institute for Democracy and Electoral Assistance (IDEA), Mongolia hosted the IDEA Annual Democracy Forum last month. At this year's Forum, the focus was on learning from democratic transitions. Experts from many countries with various democracy models shared their experiences relating to improving the modalities of elections, accountability and transparency. It was truly a knowledge-sharing and inspiring exercise. Mongolia's International Cooperation Fund, to which we are committed, will expand its activities to work together with emerging democracies.

Mongolia holds dear human rights and liberties. These days we talk all too often about human rights and the rule of law. Whether we uphold such values is tested by actual practice and implementation. The entire 2030 Agenda is centred on respect for human rights and human dignity. We, the Member States, have the primary responsibility for upholding human rights. In order to assume its responsibilities, Mongolia has started a new phase of legal reform aimed at ensuring the full protection of human rights, including the right to justice.

Mongolia has abolished the death penalty. I believe that the death penalty is neither acceptable nor justifiable under any circumstances. I believe that one day our loving human family will become free of the death penalty. I know it is not easy to exercise leadership on that tough issue. Nevertheless, as a democratic society in the East, Mongolia will spare no effort to promote human rights and human dignity.

As a member of the Human Rights Council, Mongolia will work against any form of discrimination. Ten years ago, we, the Member States, created the Human Rights Council to put the human rights pillar back at the centre of the United Nations system. It was created to provide a space for open dialogue so as to respond to human rights emergencies. As we know all too well, human rights are, sadly, threatened around the world. Many countries fail to uphold human rights while countering terrorism. The Human Rights Council must act effectively to create a global culture based on respect for human rights and dignity for all.

The spread of terrorism all over the world is a grave concern for us. Terrorism is a common challenge for all of humankind. It is a common threat to national security, as well as to the global order. We all witness, almost every day, humanitarian disasters and massive human rights violations. Mongolia firmly opposes all forms of terrorism and violence. There is no justification for terrorism of any kind. The international community

must be united to defeat and counter terrorism. At the same time, we should also do all we can to prevent that form of violent extremism.

In July this year, Mongolia successfully hosted the eleventh Asia-Europe Meeting (ASEM) Summit to commemorate the twentieth anniversary of that forum. I take this opportunity to express my heartfelt gratitude to the Heads of State and Government and leaders of the ASEM partner organizations for attending the Summit and contributing to its success. I am proud to report to the General Assembly that the leaders of Asia and Europe came together to chart out the future course of action for the next decade. We reaffirmed our strong determination to take joint actions to consolidate peace, security and stability. Asia and Europe stand united in our actions against terrorism, corruption and poverty. I firmly believe that ASEM multilateralism will advance global well-being and prosperity. Once again, I thank representatives for visiting my homeland for a once-in-a-century event of global magnitude.

In the Ulaanbaatar Declaration, the leaders of Asia and Europe sent strong messages to the people of the world about how we will work together during the next decade. We are united in contributing to sustained peace, security, stability and economic recovery and in responding to global and regional challenges in the twenty-first century. We all agreed on the key role that the United Nations should play in maintaining international peace and security.

It has always been a profound delight for me, as the Head of State of Mongolia, to report to the General Assembly on the successful service of Mongolian sons and daughters as Blue Helmets, who stand guard for global peace and stability. The United Nations is doing its utmost to protect civilians, end conflicts and create conditions for lasting peace. The security environment is far more complex and more dangerous than ever, and the services of United Nations peacekeepers have never been as much in demand as now.

The world is not yet free of wars, devastation and destitution, but we believe that there will come a day when child refugees will no longer be swept onto the shore by cold ocean tides, when children will no longer be orphaned in senseless violence and wars and when people will no longer be afraid to take peaceful strolls in the beautiful cities of Nice, Istanbul or Dhaka.

South Sudan is still the youngest member of the international community. The people of South Sudan need our help and support, and we are proud that Mongolian peacekeepers, together with fellow Blue Helmets, continue to extend their helping hand to the people of South Sudan. We honour their bravery and dedication. I would like to take this opportunity to express my profound appreciation to the thousands of courageous members of international humanitarian organizations. They put their very lives at risk while saving millions from certain death and starvation. Once again, I congratulate them.

The demand for mediation and support and good offices for humanitarian assistance has reached an all-time high. Conflict situations must be resolved. My own region, North-East Asia, is home to many unresolved issues. The last stronghold and division of the Cold War still persists on the Korean peninsula. Any development there will have a direct impact on regional and our own security and stability. Once again, we reiterate our firm position that the Korean peninsula should be nuclear-weapon-free.

In order to resolve tensions and conflicts, it is crucial to eradicate mistrust among the nations concerned and to hold direct talks more often. The Ulaanbaatar Dialogue on Northeast Asian Security is called upon to do exactly that: to promote trust in the region, to facilitate the exchange of ideas and to find solutions to common concerns. The task is complicated and not easy. However, every Member of the United Nations will strive for an appropriate solution.

In conclusion, allow me to express Mongolia's full commitment to faithfully implementing both the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and the Paris Agreement on Climate Change. We must demonstrate to the world and to our nations that meaningful progress is being made on all 17 Sustainable Development Goals. We reaffirm our firm commitment to the multilateral system with the United Nations at its core. Let us therefore work together for the progress on global development for future generations. As always, Mongolia will play its part for the cause of peace, freedom and justice.

The Acting President (*spoke in Spanish*): On behalf of the General Assembly, I wish to thank the President of Mongolia for the statement he has just made.

Mr. Tsakhia Elbegdorj, President of Mongolia, was escorted from the General Assembly Hall.

Address by Mr. Macky Sall, President of the Republic of Senegal

The Acting President (*spoke in Spanish*): The Assembly will now hear an address by the President of the Republic of Senegal.

Mr. Macky Sall, President of the Republic of Senegal, was escorted into the General Assembly Hall.

The Acting President (*spoke in Spanish*): On behalf of the General Assembly, I have the honour to welcome to the United Nations His Excellency Mr. Macky Sall, President of the Republic of Senegal, and to invite him to address the Assembly.

President Sall (*spoke in French*): The delegation of Senegal wishes to thank the former President of the General Assembly for his efforts during the previous session and wishes the current President every success in the carrying out of his mandate.

We are gathered here once again to breathe new life into the founding principles of the United Nations, to promote peace and progress and to cultivate the spirit of tolerance and mutual understanding among peoples. Nevertheless, the world has never been so violent or dangerous as it is now, as innocent people, whose only mistake was to be in the wrong place at the wrong time, are being killed without reason, leaving entire families plunged into grief and mourning. No cause, certainly no religious cause, can justify violence. The height of cowardice is attacks against priests and imams, including at religious sites.

Senegal — a land of cultural and religious diversity, where the Muslim 95 per cent of the population live in harmony with their Christian fellow countrymen and people of other traditional religions — firmly condemns and rejects violence in all of its forms and manifestations. By the same token, we reject facile and unjust assignments of blame. Neither Islam nor Muslims are to blame for what we are witnessing. We refuse to have the senseless acts of a faithless, lawless minority be used as a pretext for stigmatizing more than 1 billion Muslims and their religion. When imams are killed and mosques are attacked, including acred Islamic sites, it is Muslims whose faith and very core are being attacked. We must therefore not condemn Muslims for actions of which they themselves are the victims. It is high time to cease the madness and Islamophobic slurs.

Senegal is concerned every time measures target Muslim countries and communities, in violation of human rights and the rules that govern international relations. To lapse into senseless Islamophobia only compounds suffering with more suffering. It stokes antagonism and exacerbates the clash of civilizations, which plays into the hands of extremists of all stripes. Given the global terrorist threat affecting us all, good sense dictates the need to cooperate to vanquish evil with a global, united and concerted response.

The values that bring us together and make each of our peoples feel like part of the United Nations family derive from the fact that all civilizations and cultures are equal in dignity. Therefore, since we are the United Nations, let us apply the same commitment and diligence to tackling all of the challenges we face, from Syria to Libya, from South Sudan to Somalia, from Northern Mali to countries plagued by the criminal activities of the Boko Haram terrorist group. Let us give the same priority to all threats to international peace and security.

Let us finally work to arrive at a fair solution to the protracted Israeli-Palestinian conflict, one which upholds the legitimate right of the Palestinian people to a State living side by side with Israel in peace, each within secure and internationally recognized borders. Let us extend the same respect and humanity to all migrants, refugees and displaced persons, regardless of their origin.

Let us finally rectify the historical injustice of a Security Council without a permanent seat for Africa, the only continent in that situation. I would recall in that connection that Africa accounts for nearly one third of United Nations Members, and that issues involving Africa form the bulk of the work of the Security Council. Senegal will continue its mandate in the Security Council. We remain wedded to the African position, as set forth in the Ezulwini Consensus. We remain open to dialogue with those whose opinions differ from ours.

Last year, we adopted the Agenda for Sustainable Development for the period up until 2030, and we adopted the Paris Agreement on Climate Change. With the theme of this session, which calls for a universal effort to transform our world, we have a fresh opportunity to translate our commitments into action. For African countries, the issue of energy remains a vital challenge, because there can be neither industrialization nor development without access to electricity at competitive costs. Africa cannot continue

to enlighten other continents with its resources, while it itself remains in the dark. Africa cannot continue to serve as a reservoir for raw materials, processed elsewhere to the detriment of its own industrialization. Africa cannot remain the continent that is most affected by climate change, even though our contribution to carbon dioxide emissions related to electricity is at the lowest level, expected to reach only 3 per cent in 2040.

The Paris Agreement, which we signed in April, compels us to work together and calls for developing countries, especially in Africa, not to adopt the same polluting patterns as industrialized countries. To that end, the African Union last July launched a support fund to provide electricity to Africa. The fund is housed at the African Development Bank, and its aim is to mobilize financing for electricity projects as part of an energy mix. On behalf of the New Partnership for Africa's Development, the steering committee of which Senegal chairs, I commend the support of France and Germany for that initiative. I invite all bilateral and multilateral partners to contribute to the financing of the fund for providing energy to Africa, in line with the commitments made under the Paris Agreement to finance mitigation and adaptation measures.

Furthermore, I call for a different view of development challenges in Africa. Let us set aside the clichés of a bygone past. Let us not look at Africa as a land of humanitarian emergencies and a receptacle for official development assistance, but rather as a continent that is being built, a centre for development and progress. Africa is a continent of roads and highways, of bridges and railways, of dams and power plants, of industrial zones and modern agricultural farms. That is our ambition for our countries. We cannot achieve that ambition through assistance, only through large-scale urgent investments in sectors that generate growth and development. We wish to depend mainly on the mobilization of our own resources through more effective public spending, greater and fairer remuneration for our raw materials, regulated taxation and a more robust struggle against illicit financial flows.

In that connection, Senegal supports the plan to combat tax-base erosion and profit-shifting, which was initiated by the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development and the Group of 20, with support from the World Bank and the International Monetary Fund. At the same time, I would call for the immediate implementation of the "Strengthening assistance for complex contract negotiations" initiative of the Group of Seven, especially in the area of mines and hydrocarbons. We wish to see fair and balanced contracts that protect both the interests of the investor and the rights of the host country.

Finally, I would call upon all public and private partners not to overestimate the investment risks in Africa. Africa has achieved significant progress in terms of good governance and improvements in the business climate. The risk there is not greater than elsewhere, and clearly, for a global economy that is currently suffering, Africa does not pose risks. Rather, the continent affords opportunities for recovery and shared growth. Let us work to reform global financing so as to alleviate the conditions limiting access to credit for development financing.

By drawing upon our faith in a new Africa, for two years we have continued to implement the Emerging Senegal Plan through major infrastructure projects, notably central electric-power plants, a new urban centre, transportation infrastructure, including a second toll road, and the forthcoming launch of a regional express train line linking Dakar to our new international airport, soon to be finished.

In conclusion, I would like to thank the Secretary-General, Mr. Ban Ki-moon, for all his efforts and service to the United Nations in this difficult time.

I also wish to pay tribute to President Barak Obama of the United States for his contribution to the international agenda over the course of his two presidential terms. The path taken by President Obama through the decision of the American people is a historic message, a universal message, a message inviting every person to overcome the shadows of their own prejudice to embrace the light of wisdom. It is a message of humanity that is reminiscent of the eloquent words delivered by the Reverend Martin Luther King, Jr. 53 years ago in front of the Lincoln Memorial, that people "will not be judged by the colour of their skin, but by the content of their character".

What holds true for humankind also holds true for nations. There are no large and small nations; there are united nations. And since we are the United Nations, all voices must count when we deliberate on our common issues. I wish the General Assembly every success in its work.

The Acting President (*spoke in Spanish*): On behalf of the General Assembly, I wish to thank the President of the Republic of Senegal for the statement he has just made.

Mr. Macky Sall, President of the Republic of Senegal, was escorted from the General Assembly Hall.

Agenda item 8 (*continued*)

General debate

Address by Mr. John Key, Prime Minister of New Zealand

The Acting President (*spoke in Spanish*): The Assembly will now hear an address by the Prime Minister of New Zealand.

Mr. John Key, Prime Minister of New Zealand, was escorted to the rostrum.

The Acting President (*spoke in Spanish*): On behalf of the General Assembly, I have great pleasure in welcoming His Excellency Mr. John Key, Prime Minister of New Zealand, and inviting him to address the General Assembly.

Mr. Key (New Zealand): It is special pleasure to speak to the General Assembly under the presidency of a Pacific island friend.

The world is facing serious challenges. Borders are closing to people and products, and to investment and ideas. Many States are turning inwards. The politics of fear and extremism are gaining ground. Too many States are flouting the rules. But no country can face today's challenges alone. Now more than ever, we need to show that we are united in our respect for the principles of the Charter of the United Nations. They are the basic principles that underpin our global system, born from the bitter experience of war, and they are as relevant today as they were in 1945.

My country, New Zealand, is a proudly independent, multicultural trading nation in the Asia-Pacific region. The international system matters to us. We are committed to being a good global citizen and to playing our part. We rise on the fortunes of all Member States. We believe that it is in all our interests to be open and outward-facing, to work through our differences, to have rules and, most of all, to play by them. Now is the time to reinforce the relevance and standing of the United Nations in our response to today's challenges.

There are many areas where the United Nations could be more efficient, more representative, more responsive and show greater leadership. It is our collective responsibility as Member States to face up to the political commitment necessary to make the United Nations the body that we want it to be.

For the past two years, our focus has been on the Security Council. We are using our term on the Council to raise the tough issues, because we believe that that is what the Council is for and what our supporters expect us to do. New Zealand is working for a Security Council that shows more leadership on the toughest political issues, that works harder to get the incentives right so as to broker solutions and that is better at responding to political crises before they spiral out of control.

The Council has put its weight behind many successes, from the adoption of the Iran deal to ending the long-running war in Colombia. But the Council also has shortcomings that, if not addressed, risk undermining its relevance and standing in world affairs. For the vast majority of Member States, which are dependent on a fair, rules-based international system, a weak Council is not an option. We acknowledge that the Council does not have a role in every crisis. But the reality is that we need the Council to respond when no one else can. That is why we have consistently called for Council action to revive the Middle East peace process.

We have also been deeply troubled to see the Council, the pre-eminent body for international peace and security, fail to live up to its responsibilities on the most serious crisis of our time — Syria. There the Council has fallen short. The internal politics within the Council and the sheer complexity of the Syrian crisis have obstructed a unified Council response. But we believe that no matter how difficult and sensitive the issues, the Council cannot watch the situation go from bad to worse for the Syrian people. The Security Council was established to address crises such as that which we see in Syria. That is why New Zealand is using our presidency of the Council to convene a leaders' level meeting tomorrow on Syria.

A meeting by itself will not stop the conflict. But after more than five years of brutal fighting and horrific humanitarian suffering, we do not think that it is credible for leaders to come to New York and not address the stark realities driving the conflict. We hope that tomorrow's meeting will provide an opportunity for Council leaders to take stock of developments, examine

the fundamental issues at the heart of the conflict and discuss how we can move towards a sustainable political solution.

We also hope that the meeting will be a chance for the Council to put its weight behind the ceasefire agreement reached between the United States and Russia. That agreement is the best chance we have had in some time to stop the fighting, get aid to those who need it and get back on track for a political resolution to the crisis.

Another critical issue on which New Zealand supports unified Council action is the Democratic People's Republic of Korea. New Zealand believes that a strong international response is required to the Democratic People's Republic of Korea's nuclear test on 9 September and its recent missile tests. The regime's efforts to advance its nuclear and missile programmes, its callous disregard for the North Korean people, as demonstrated by the human rights situation in the country, and its leader's unpredictably ruthless rule have made it one of our most pressing international security threats. Its provocative actions show blatant disregard for Security Council resolutions and pose a grave threat to international law. They have raised tensions on the Korean peninsula to a point where the risk of conflict is dangerously high. We cannot afford further escalation.

New Zealand therefore welcomes recent steps by the United States and China to begin negotiating a new Security Council resolution, following the Democratic People's Republic of Korea's recent nuclear test. We hope that this will send a clear signal to the North Korean leadership that continued provocative and dangerous actions are unacceptable and that a return to the negotiating table represents the only sensible way forward. The international community must stand together in conveying these messages, including through fully implementing Security Council sanctions.

The Council has impact and influence when it is unified, but we have to get better at identifying incentives that encourage unified Council positions. For a country with a proud tradition of being a pragmatic bridge-builder and problem-solver, the Council can be an incredibly frustrating place to work. But we are committed to trying to make it work because it is in our collective interest to have a strong and relevant Council.

We all need to make an investment in keeping it on track where it is needed most: in preventing and stopping conflict. That means coming to the Council ready to find a way to get beyond vested political interests and being prepared to work on compromise solutions that stop the fighting.

The veto plays a huge part in the Council's effectiveness. No matter how hard we work to find compromises, time and time again we come up against the veto. The use of the veto, the threat of the veto, the exploitation of the veto is well beyond what the founders of the United Nations ever envisaged.

We acknowledge that addressing regional and national interests is a fundamental part of the process of finding durable solutions. But increasingly the Charter is being ignored and the Council seen as irrelevant as countries put pursuit of their national interests before almost anything else. The time for moving forward on Security Council reform is now. We will be pushing more than ever for action in the General Assembly to make the Council better reflect today's realities and needs.

New Zealand is also working to make the Council more effective in conflict prevention. We want to make the Council better at responding to political crises before they spiral out of control. There is no lack of mandate for conflict prevention. It is in the Charter. There is no lack of information about escalating situations. We see the evidence of this, often in the most heart-breaking images in the media. The problem is that we do not always have the will, and we do not use the tools available to us.

Many States block action, asserting sovereignty and ignoring the rest of the Charter. Others do not want to spend the money. Most have bilateral or national interests. And leaders of countries in political crisis often do not want their actions to be on the Council's agenda.

But we cannot ignore the growing gap between the humanitarian costs of picking up the pieces after conflict and the amount that the United Nations allocates to prevent conflict. The shortfall is growing at an unsustainable rate, while the peace operations budget is increasing year on year.

But this is not about money. It is about saving lives. That is why New Zealand is trying to get the Council working more closely with regional organizations and getting the Council to be more willing to engage at an earlier point with countries in crisis. This is a focus of

our presidency, and it will continue to be a focus of our work when we come off the Council.

Beyond the Security Council, parts of the United Nations system are stepping up. There have been significant steps forward on development, climate, financing, humanitarian issues and disaster risk reduction. These issues are of significant importance to our closest development partners, small island developing States.

For economic development to be fully realized, the Sustainable Development Goals must be implemented by all. But developments here in the United Nations do not exist in a vacuum, apart from the global economy and trading system. Sustainable economic development is a key driver of global growth, prosperity and, most of all, stability. This requires a fair, rules-based trading system, more open trade and the removal of trade barriers.

The multilateral trading system has been a critical factor in this respect. Last year, we welcomed an agreement by the World Trade Organization (WTO) to eliminate agricultural export subsidies. This was the first legally binding international trade outcome in agriculture since 1994. This matters for development and will make a real difference for rural communities.

But the types of challenges that the United Nations faces are similar to those that have hindered more progress in the WTO in recent years. New Zealand believes that the WTO needs to do more to set global trade rules. We need it to find common ground that overcomes vested national interests and agree to new international trade commitments that benefit all countries.

In the Asia-Pacific region, closer economic integration through trade agreements such as the Trans-Pacific Partnership and the Regional Comprehensive Economic Partnership will also bring us closer together. Agreements like these will make our region and people better off by setting the conditions for more open and transparent trade. A more prosperous and integrated region will also be a more secure one, and that is in all of our interests.

We must guard against creeping protectionism and be willing to make the case for more economic engagement clearly. We cannot turn inward. We cannot allow fear or narrow domestic interests to turn us away from an open global trading system that has lifted millions out of poverty. Countries that close their borders cannot and do not do business. History has shown that this does not work for our countries. It will not help our peoples, and protectionism will have a chilling effect on our ability to deliver on the Sustainable Development Goals.

A decision of critical importance to the future of the United Nations will be made in the coming weeks. In April, I was very pleased to nominate former New Zealand Prime Minister Helen Clark to be the first United Nations Secretary-General from the Pacific. This is not the time for a business-as-usual appointment of a Secretary-General. We need someone who is up to the job. The next Secretary-General must have the courage, experience and skills necessary to lead this Organisation, to keep it relevant and responsive. I have worked across the political divide from Helen Clark for years, and I know her to be a natural leader. She rallies people together to find common ground, even when the issues are difficult and the differences vast. She gets things done. We think it is time for a Secretary-General like Helen Clark.

I am proud of the contribution that New Zealand is making to the Security Council, but I am keenly aware of the Council's limitations. It is the General Assembly that now needs to act to make the United Nations stronger and more relevant to the world. New Zealand is committed to the principles and values of the United Nations. We will keep working hard for those principles, because we believe that they are vital for a safer, more prosperous future.

The Acting President (*spoke in Spanish*): On behalf of the General Assembly, I wish to thank the Prime Minister of New Zealand for the statement he has just made.

Mr. John Key, Prime Minister of New Zealand, was escorted from the rostrum.

Address by Mr. Matteo Renzi, President of the Council of Ministers of the Republic of Italy

The Acting President (*spoke in Spanish*): The Assembly will now hear an address by the President of the Council of Ministers of the Republic of Italy.

Mr. Matteo Renzi, President of the Council of Ministers of the Republic of Italy, was escorted to the rostrum.

The Acting President (*spoke in Spanish*): I have great pleasure in welcoming His Excellency Mr. Matteo Renzi, President of the Council of Ministers of the Republic of Italy, and inviting him to address the General Assembly.

Mr. Renzi (Italy) (*spoke in Italian; interpretation provided by the delegation*): As we approach the close of this day, I feel the responsibility to refer from this rostrum to the statement addressed to all of us by the President of the United States, Barack Obama (see A/71/PV.8). In summarizing the past eight years of his presidency and his relationship with the United Nations, he highlighted how the international context today is riven by a deep division between the world of fear and the world of courage, between the world of resentment and the world of hope, and between anger and opportunity.

A new season is therefore beginning, one filled with opportunities and possibilities, but also with unprecedented threats and difficulties that, until a short while ago, had seemed in all likelihood to be very remote. Foremost among them is the threat of terrorism to our cities, to everyday life. Terrorism no longer strikes only conventional targets, but rather the human dimension: a theatre, a restaurant, a museum, a stadium. Also pressing are the risks connected with pandemics, which are sometimes exaggerated but very often constitute grave risks, as well as the risks connected to the environment, to which this community of women and men, together with my colleagues, was able to give a response by signing the important Paris Agreement on Climate Change this past April.

But there are also risks linked with other events that combine to make the future seem more a time of concern than of hope, from risks connected to natural disasters — one of which Italy experienced a few weeks ago in Amatrice, Cumuli and Arquata — to the great questions concerning migration and the worries that that phenomenon instils in the hearts of people, the questions it raises and the difficulties it presents. The future has therefore become more and more a place of doubt, of fear. Yet we need to choose the road of hope, the road of possibility, the road of opportunity.

The problems are not in fact theoretical problems that need to be tackled by an assembly of experts. These problems have a face: it is the face of Omran, the Syrian boy, shell-shocked, covered in blood, looking with his big eyes not so much at the photographer's lens as at the hearts of each one of us; it is the eyes of Nadia, the Yazidi girl whom I met yesterday, who escaped from the violence of Da'esh and is today a courageous witness in a battle on behalf of human rights, of women's rights, of freedom.

They are challenges and threats for which borders no longer exist. They are in the hearts of our cities and sometimes on the outskirts of European cities, which have often forgotten the true sense of threats inside our borders rather than outside them. Every reference to what happened between Paris and Brussels is deliberate.

I therefore wondered, in conveying the greetings of Italy, which voice from Rome I should bring to those issues. It would be nice, of course, to share with the Assembly the words of hope and also of pride that characterize the concrete acts of saving hundreds of thousands of human lives from the Mediterranean — lives otherwise condemned by desperation — by the Italian women and men wearing the uniform of the Navy or the Coast Guard.

It would be nice to bring to each member of the General Assembly the pride and the voice of the Italians who work in the fields of culture, education and research; of Italians who, together with other Europeans, are leading the European mission that in a few weeks will see for the first time a European spacecraft land on Mars, on 19 October, in exactly one month — a sign of the research that is making Europe not only a place of technocrats and bureaucrats, but also a place looking toward the future.

Yet I would like to propose a different, even provocative image. The image of Rome that I would like to propose is that of Aeneas. Aeneas is the man of the journey. Mythology is filled with examples of people who set out on journeys. Some set out on a journey to return home, like Odysseus. And some, like Aeneas, chose to journey to create a new city, a new civilization.

Aeneas sets out on a journey carrying on his shoulders his ailing father. It is a sign of a generation that is not afraid to assume its responsibilities and that believes that the experience of the elderly is still an absolute value and will go so far as to bear on its shoulders the added burden of history. Aeneas is the man who ensures for his son, Ascanius, the possibility of going on to live and to found the great history of Rome. But Aeneas is the man who, in the foundation myth, is the bearer of pietas, the sense of profound respect, halfway between the religious value and

the profound sense of cultural identity that makes a community worthy of being called a community. Without pietas, without compassion for others, there is no room for community. And this is why, to my mind, it is essential that we tackle the challenge launched this morning from this rostrum by Barack Obama with the great value of pietas and the building of communities to which the myth of Aeneas refers.

This is how Italy will tackle the challenges of 2017: by participating in the Security Council, a responsibility that it will share with the Netherlands. It will participate in the Council, which will see a new Secretary-General, with the assumption of responsibility and the conviction that the Sustainable Development Goals, the challenges associated with environmental and technological sustainability and the building of an ever-stronger community will reflect the values that have made our history great. In 2017 Italy will participate in the life of the international community by hosting, on 25 March, the States members of the European Union for the sixtieth anniversary of the signing of the European Treaty, with the goal of making of Europe not merely an evocation of history but rather a new chapter in a book to be written with increased ideals, dreams, horizons and vision, not with a tiring and repetitive day-by-day listing of bureaucratic rules and decisions.

Italy will lead the work of the Group of Seven (G-7), which will meet at a splendid site in Sicily — that land of great culture and great values — by the Greek theatre in Taormina, facing Mount Etna with the Mediterranean Sea before it bathing the shores of that extraordinary region. The agenda will focus on the actions that we have been discussing today: increasing our contributions to development cooperation and investments in education. For we must not forget that, if the terrorist problem has its origins in theatres of war, there is also a terrorist problem originating in the abandoned outskirts of our cities, and the only weapon that can counter such terrorism is an enormous investment in education and human capital.

We are very proud that the Italian Government has adopted a law, with the support of representatives of Parliament, that stipulates that for every euro invested in security, policing, cybertechnology and cybersecurity, one euro must be invested in culture, education, recreation, preschool education, theatres and other venues that nurture the spirit and the soul, because that is another way to fight the crisis of our era.

We will ensure that the meeting of the G-7 serves as an important occasion to reflect on the values of identity and culture, as well as the challenge of food in the double sense of the fight against poverty and starvation, on the one hand, and the value of food security and health awareness, on the other. At the same time, we are convinced that the challenge facing the Security Council, the challenge facing Europe and the challenge facing the G-7 share the same root, based on the same blueprint.

It is our duty as Italians to bring our voice and our contribution to the United Nations in seeking and identifying ancient values with a new inflection. Today, the pietas of Aeneas has become an opportunity to build a new world based on hope and not on resentment, hatred or anger. Our people, our men and women, continue to work to serve the ideals of peace. They include our women and men in diplomacy and politics, and the women and men who serve our country by wearing a uniform in Afghanistan and in Somalia, by protecting the Mosul Dam in an area fundamental to the future of our planet, and by serving in the Balkans as well, in particular in Serbia. They are security professionals with additional features, namely, the priority they place on humanity.

The women and men who make us proud to be a part of the Italian heritage know that we have not originated from nothing, but rather from the tradition to which I have referred, one that finds its highest expression represented by the Mediterranean Sea. The Mediterranean is the sea that the Romans called Mare Nostrum — our sea. It is the sea where today hundreds and thousands of people seek refuge as they flee from war, from hunger and from poverty. The responsibility for that part of the world has become our ever-growing burden.

In comparison, while we can say that progress has been made in Libya since last year, too little has been accomplished by the international community, particularly Europe, in transforming the Mediterranean Sea into a place where we meet the challenge of dignity. If we do not prioritize the values of humanity and pietas in that geographic area, in that corner of the world, we will have betrayed our tradition. That is why Italy accepts the challenge launched today by the President of the United States to the General Assembly by stating that we will always be on the side of democracy, freedom, values and ideals, with the determination that flows from those who have a great dream and a

great vision, but also at the same time the deep desire to make politics into a noble and concrete activity, by intervening without leaving the responsibility for follow-up to others and by fully embracing the deeper meaning of the challenge that we, for our part, call humanity.

The Acting President (*spoke in Spanish*): On behalf of the General Assembly, I wish to thank the President of the Council of Ministers of the Republic of Italy for the statement he has just made.

Mr. Matteo Renzi, President of the Council of Ministers of the Republic of Italy, was escorted from the rostrum.

The meeting rose at 9.15 p.m.